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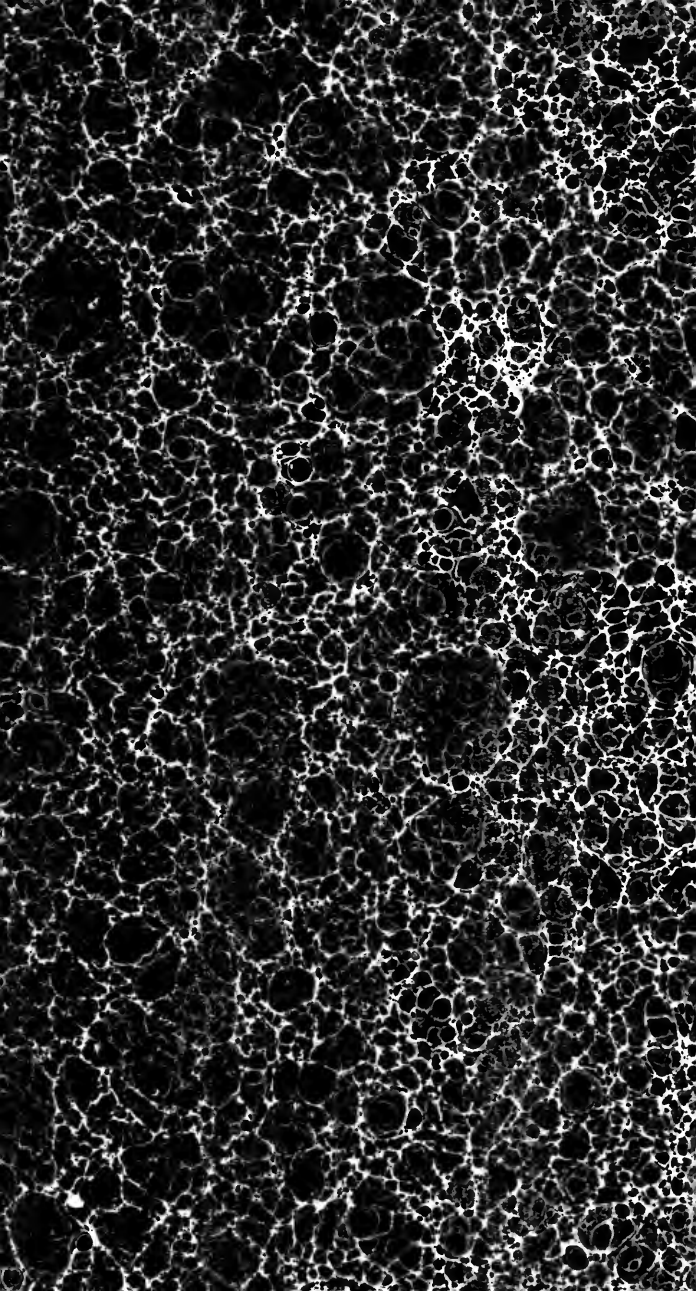
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ANGLO-INDIA.

VOL. II.



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BEING A

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FROM THE

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SOCIETY AND MANNERS.



THE CULINA BRAHMINS.

A CONTROVERSY of an interesting character has sprung up, in the principal presidency of India, amongst the natives chiefly, regarding the Culina Brahmins, the fruits of which may possibly check, or entirely stop, an abuse which must materially influence the morals of the native population of Bengal.

The Culinas, or Koolins, are a class of brahmins said to have been distinguished from the rest by Balala Séna, raja of Ghour, some five or six centuries ago, who, to encourage learning and an adherence to the Shastras, amongst the brahmins, divided them into three orders, the first and most honourable of which were denominated Culinas, from *Cula*, ‘a race,’ and who were required to possess nine qualifications: 1st. to observe the peculiar duties of brahmins; 2d. to be meek; 3d. to be

learned; 4th. to be of good character; 5th. to be disposed to visit holy places; 6th. to be devout; 7th. to be averse to receiving gifts from the impure; 8th. to be fond of an ascetic life; 9th. to be liberal. These Culinas and their descendants, in consequence, enjoy vast consideration, even amongst the other brahmins, who invariably yield them the seat of honour, and their alliance in marriage is coveted as a great distinction.

From this last circumstance, an evil of great magnitude appears to have arisen. A Culina brahmin may marry, or give his son in marriage to, a woman of an inferior order; but his daughters must marry persons of his own order, or remain unmarried. When Culinas marry a woman of an inferior order, they receive large presents of money; and as they are not limited in the number of wives, some of them convert this privilege into a source of pecuniary profit; and it is said that many of the disreputable Culinas marry from twenty to a hundred wives each. In the mean time, the sons of Culinas being generally pre-engaged in these venal matches, their daughters can find no husbands; and consequently too frequently form irregular connections.

The vicious effects of this practice are detailed by Mr. Ward, in his account of the castes of the Hindus : *

* *View of the Hindoos*, vol. i. p. 81.

“ Each kooleenu marries at least two wives; one the daughter of a bramhun of his own order, and the other of a shrotriyu; the former he generally leaves at her father's, the other he takes to his own house. It is essential to the honour of a kooleenu that he have one daughter, but by the birth of many daughters he sinks in respect: hence he dreads, more than other Hindoos, the birth of daughters. Some inferior kooleenus marry many wives. I have heard of persons having 120. Thus the creation of this *order of merit* has ended in a state of monstrous polygamy, which has no parallel in the history of human depravity. Amongst the Turks, seraglios are confined to men of wealth; but here, a Hindoo brahmun, possessing only a shred of cloth and a poita, keeps more than a hundred mistresses. Many have fifteen or twenty, and others forty or fifty each. Numbers procure a subsistence by this excessive polygamy: at their marriages, they obtain large presents, and as often as they visit these wives, they receive presents from the father; and thus, having married into forty or fifty families, a kooleenu goes from house to house, and is fed, clothed, &c. Some old men, after the wedding, never see the female; others visit her once in three or four years. A respectable kooleenu never lives with the wife who remains in the house

of her parents; he sees her occasionally, as a friend rather than as a husband, and dreads to have offspring by her, as he thereby sinks in honour. Children born in the houses of their fathers-in-law are never owned by the father. In consequence of this state of things, both the married and unmarried daughters of the kooleenus are plunged into an abyss of misery; and the inferior orders are now afraid of giving their daughters to these nobles among the bramhuns.

“ These customs are the cause of infinite evils: kooleenu married women, neglected by their husbands, in hundreds of instances, live in adultery; in some cases with the knowledge of their parents. The houses of ill-fame at Calcutta, and other large towns, are filled with the daughters of kooleenu bramhuns; and the husbands of these women have lately been found, to a most extraordinary extent, among the most notorious and dangerous dakaits (decoits): so entirely degraded are these favourites of Bullalsenu !* ”

* Mr. Ward adds, in a note, the following horrible particulars : “ it is universally admitted among the Hindoos, that the practice of causing abortions prevails to a most dreadful extent among the women. A kooleenu brahmun assured me, that he had heard of more than fifty women, daughters of koolenus, confess these murders. To remove my doubts, he referred me to an instance which took place in the village where he was born, where the woman was

A letter, professing to be written by a Hindu, signed "An unmarried Brahmin," appeared in the *Sumachar Durpun*, a newspaper published for circulation amongst the natives, partly in Bengalee and partly in English, and known to be edited by Mr. Marshman, one of the missionaries at Serampore College, in which the writer exposed the abuses attending the inordinate privileges of the Culina class, which gave them the monopoly of the brahmin females, and intimated that it was desirable that Government should interpose and put a stop to these practices, grounding his argument upon the late interposition in respect to suttees.

The editor of the *Durpun*, in commenting upon this letter, observes that no practice entailed greater misery on the inhabitants of Bengal; that the original ground of the distinction conferred upon the Culina brahmins, was their superior virtue and attainments; and that, so far from the distinction

removed in the night to an adjoining village, till she had taken medicines, &c. Her paramour and friends were about to be seized, on a charge of murder, when the woman returned home, having recovered from the indisposition occasioned by the medicine she had taken. On making further inquiry into this subject, a friend, upon whose authority I can implicitly rely, assured me, that a very respectable and learned brahmun, who certainly was not willing to charge his countrymen with more vices than they possessed, told him it was supposed that *a thousand of these abortions took place in Calcutta every month!*"

being now justifiable on that ground, there are not at present a fourth of the number of men of learning among the Culinas as among any other class of brahmins. The writer confirms Mr. Ward's account in some particulars, and adds:

“The natural consequence of this system is, that while a kooleenu is paid for marrying a young woman, those brahmuns who are not kooleenus are obliged to pay a high price for their wives, and are frequently constrained to borrow money at a high interest, to the extent of three, four, or five hundred rupees, and continue to labour under a heavy load of debt for many years. This is indeed a crying evil, and productive of much immorality, as well as of great unhappiness.

“This system prevails only in Bengal; it is contrary to the rules of the shastrus, and inimical to the happiness of the people; and as it was established by royal authority alone, the Hindoos flatter themselves that it may be abolished by the supreme power now reigning in India. Assuredly, no greater boon of a temporal character could be bestowed on the whole class of brahmuns than the abrogation of this pernicious practice; and we feel confident that if the leading members of society in Bengal would join in a petition to Government, pointing out the peculiar hardship of the

present practice, as well as the mode in which it may be removed, the petition would meet with a favourable reception."

The *Chundrika*, a purely Hindu paper, and the organ of the Dhurma Subha, a society for promoting the observance of Hindu institutions, took up the cause of the Culinas, and, in an angry article, professed to answer the *Durpun*. The defence, however, is any thing but satisfactory. The editor says:

"To every one of his (the letter-writer's) assertions, we are prepared to give an answer; and it would require no effort to establish the proof of his falsehoods. But for the present we are restrained from doing so; because we cannot tell whether this writer be a Christian, or an Unitarian, or a Mahomedan. If he be either of these, he is not competent to take a share in this discussion respecting the division of castes and the holy shastras. If he be a Hindoo, on clearly declaring his name, place of abode, and caste, his mistake shall be rectified!"

With respect to the observations of the editor of the *Durpun*, he says:

"The whole of what he has heard respecting the koolins is utterly false; for their honour was not conferred by Raja Bullal Sen. The koolins existed in ancient times; and Bullal Sen, being a learned

king, listened to the poorans and other shastras, and according to the opinion of many pundits, establishing all these persons, merely confirmed the order of distinction to be bestowed upon them individually in succession. None are perfectly acquainted with the truth in this matter, except the pundits of the *Kool* shastras (pedigrees). The ghutuks of this country are conversant with these shastras; and they are able to give the pedigree of all brahmuns from the beginning, and are fully acquainted with the nature of that honour which belongs to the koolins. Amongst secular persons and pundits of other shastras, scarcely any person is to be found possessed of any knowledge of this shastra. If the editor of the *Durpun* wants information on this subject, let him call a number of the ghutuks and he will obtain it. After that, let him give information to his countrymen and to Government. But if he listens to common persons on the subjects of the koolins, his wisdom will be deformed by the contamination of error. There is no danger of loss to the koolins, nor any probability of success attending his representation to Government respecting the marriages of brahmuns: Government will never attend to it, for the editor of the *Durpun* is a Christian, and can have no interest in a Hindoo practice, but considering such to be evil and inju-

rious, has become desirous of its abolition. This the Governor-General can easily comprehend; for if all Hindoos were to represent it was the custom in some caste for the daughters to marry whomsoever they chose, and that even without the consent of their father and mother, and with such degradation as to unite themselves to harees and dooms, and to pray that such a custom should be abolished, would Government attend to such a representation? Were objects to be obtained merely by having them published in a newspaper or written in a book, then all the Hindoo customs would long before this have been abolished; for the missionary gentlemen have left no subject untouched; and the editor of the *Durpun* has not failed to do his part, and does not now. Our Government, in watching over its subjects, is swayed by no one, that it should violate the religious observances of any caste. If it did so, the people would be distressed, and the distress of the people would not produce prosperity to the state. If the editor of the *Durpun* is anxious for the good of this country, then it is not proper for him to shew hostility to its religion, and manners, and customs, or to seek the overthrow of any part of them. If there is any thing faulty in the practices of any class, the people of that class can themselves decide upon it; and if it ought to be abo-

lished, and there is any need of an application to Government, there is nothing to prevent them making it."

All the material parts of the charge are thus left untouched, and even unnoticed, by a writer who would have impugned them if he could.

Finding that the question had excited a good deal of interest in the circles of native society at Calcutta, the editor of the *Durpun* returned to the subject. He begins by stating, as the result of his further inquiries, that he finds that the Culinas, as a body, were not deserving of the censure contained in his former remarks; that "those, who have never been dishonoured by unequal matches, never think of marrying more than two, or, at the utmost, three wives;" and that "the practice of marrying thirty, forty, fifty, or a hundred wives, for a livelihood, is confined to the descendants of those, the lustre of whose patrician honour has already been diminished by inferior marriages." The writer then shews, from the Shastras and authoritative writers, that polygamy is contrary to the Hindu law, and that selling of daughters in marriage is expressly forbidden by Menu, and by Casyapa, one of the most revered and most ancient of the Hindu theological writers. He concludes:—

“Our brother editor has made one assertion in his last paper, which rather staggers us. He alleges that the kooleenus trace their origin to Brumha ; granted. But he also says, that their genealogical records from Brumha to the present day are in writing. Now, as Brumha existed before the Sutyu yogu, and as 32,92,930 years have passed since the beginning of that yogu, if the genealogies of all the kooleenus during this long period really exist, the whole world is not large enough to contain them, even supposing these books to be piled as high as Mount Soomeroo. There must be some little error in this calculation.”

We shall now give an extract from another native paper, the *Cowmoodi* :

“It is a matter of satisfaction, that the great defects of the modern kooleenus, which had remained concealed in the minds of our fellow-countrymen like a lamp shrouded from view, are now become so manifest. The editor of the *Durpun* is now bringing them to light in that paper ; and the great benefit which he is conferring is too manifest to require to be made known to the wise. He is receiving the blessing of many eminent men for his exertions. Although it is manifest, upon a very slight examination, that the editor is needlessly undergoing the labour of replying to the unfounded

remarks of the editor of the *Chundrika* ; yet, upon a closer examination, his labour will not be found to be useless, for the constant agitation of this subject in the shape of replies must produce increasing advantage. And although those who, like the editor of the *Chundrika*, are careless whether a thing be useful or pernicious, may derive no benefit from the discussion, yet we are convinced that the magnanimous will feel gratified by the agitation of of this subject.

“Just as a drop of rain from the Swantee constellation, if it fall upon a heap of ashes, produces no fruit, but falling upon the head of the elephant, produces a jewel !”

One of the English papers (the *India Gazette*) has inserted a letter from a native correspondent, who, like the “Unmarried Brahmin,” is of opinion that Government should interfere. He represents the Culinas, generally, as an ignorant, unprincipled, and unfeeling race, destitute of property themselves. and as introducing, by these mercenary marriages, misery into families. “The government,” he observes, “which, out of compassion for the fate of Hindoo women, has adopted an equally bold and decisive measure to save them from the flaming pile, ought to take proper steps for rendering their condition such as not to induce them to commit the

same violence to their lives, only in a different mode and in secrecy, with the disadvantage of the absence of that hope of future reward which existed in the other case, and the presence of the horror of future punishment ;” and he puts the case very forcibly in the following passage : “ Every man at all acquainted with the state of Hindoo society, must admit that the evils described are in existence ; that they are evils which ought to be removed none will question ; that the sources of these evils—polygamy and the sale of females in marriage—are opposed to the Hindoo religion, no pundit, who is not interested to maintain the contrary, will deny.”

The editor of the *India Gazette* remarks :

“ We are not surprised that the native defenders of the koolins, who must know the effects produced by the practice, deal only in abuse of their opponents. It is the only weapon adapted to their cause, for it will not bear a moment’s calm examination ; and if any European or Christian writer has seemed to give his sanction to the practice, this can only arise, we are persuaded, from a want of acquaintance with its real nature and consequences, or probably from a well-founded disapproval of the means proposed to be employed for its suppression. A call has been made on Government

to suppress it, grounded on the interposition of the supreme authority for the prevention of widow-burning; and the respectable editor of the *Sumachar Durpun*, while he disclaims any wish that Government should interfere in the domestic arrangements of the natives, yet seems to consider some sort of interference desirable, by which the monopoly of wives by the koolins might be prevented. We do not perceive how this object could be effected without interfering with the domestic arrangements of the natives. At present, we must regard such interference as impolitic and unnecessary, perhaps we might say impracticable. An authoritative prohibition of the practice it would at least be very difficult to enforce. In those countries where monogamy is the law of the land, and where it is congenial with the long-established habits and feelings of the people, the first wife, in a case of bigamy, has powerful interests and motives to induce her to bring the delinquent to justice; but here polygamy prevails, and is founded both on the law of the country and on the sentiments of the people, and in the cases to which we are referring, the alliance of the polygamist is sought as an honour. In such a state of things, the prohibition of the practice, even if it were politic or necessary, would be vain and incapable of being enforced.

But such interference is entirely opposed to good policy, and has nothing to do with the proper business of Government. There are many evils that exist in society, but which it is beyond the province of any government to seek by direct means to remove. The Hindoo parent, who gives his daughter in marriage to a polygamist, does so knowingly and voluntarily—not only without force, but in the expectation of a positive advantage from the purchased alliance. If he did not give her in marriage to a koolin, he must give her in marriage to some one else, and the effect, therefore, of any prohibitory act of authority would be to deprive the parent of, and to assume for Government, the right of making the selection. It may be, that, in a proper state of society, neither would have that right ; but of the two, the parent is most entitled to it, and the interference of Government would be wholly unjustifiable and tyrannical. The case of the abolition of suttee-burning has been adduced, but it has no real application ; for neither life nor limb is in danger, nor is any force employed against either the native parent or his offspring. It is a transaction throughout, in which, whatever its evils, nothing is given, or taken, or done, contrary either to natural or positive law.

“Looking, however, at the actual evils inflicted on

society by the practice, it is extremely desirable to devise some remedy for removing them ; and the only remedy that will be found effectual must be drawn from the moral sense of the community, inflicting deserved infamy on the koolin brahmuns who degrade themselves by mercenary marriages, and exciting Hindoo parents to rescue their female offspring from the destitution and disgrace which such connections entail. We consider the present discussion as an indication of the increasing strength which the moral feeling of the native community is acquiring, and we hope, therefore, that it will be occasionally revived, until at last the sound and moral part of native society shall have sufficient influence to put down the practice by the mere force of their own pleasure."

Discussions of this kind, discreetly initiated, will certainly do much good, and effect a speedier eradication of the evils of the Hindu system than any other expedient whatsoever.

It is stated by Mr. Ward, that, in 1815, some Hindus of high caste were on the eve of petitioning the British Government to interfere, with the view of breaking up this monopoly of wives by the Culinas, on the ground of its preventing many persons from entering the marriage-state.

The following details respecting this caste, from

the *Calcutta Christian Observer* for January 1836, may be appended to the foregoing paper:

Above the Bansha brahman, rises the Khetriya, and over him the Kulin—the proudest of the proud—who, if not disgusted by the servility of parasites, may live as a prince, not among beggars, but among princes of his own tribe. How niggardly soever his habits ; how despicable soever his literary attainments, and contemptible his manners ; how filthy soever his person, and disgusting his costume ; how rapacious soever his disposition, and mean his conduct, to be a Kulin is to be divine. To be regarded with veneration, and flattered by adulation ; to be privileged with a home in the bosom of every brahman family ; aye, and to be bribed with money for consenting to eat of the bounty of his fellow brahman, are the usurped prerogatives of the Kulin. His visits are welcomed, his stay solicited, his departure regretted, as the removal of a divine being, whose presence confers the *summum bonum* of temporal and eternal blessings.

Notwithstanding his divine origin, as he eats, sleeps, and dies, like other men, we may suppose him to possess the dispositions, appetites and passions, incident to human nature ; to be attracted, at least in some period of his life, by connubial happiness ; and, when married, to seek a settled home, that he may confer on his offspring an education suited to their rank : but, in

tracing the path of the divine Kulin, such a supposition would mislead us. Though originally restricted to two wives, with one of whom only he should cohabit, unless she be sterile, he now defies all moral restraints, and multiplies his wives more rapidly than he numbers the years of his life : aye, and has been known at the verge of death, when his friends were bearing him to his long home, anxious lest the ebb of life should bear him beyond their reach ere they could lave his body in the sacred stream, to have married two wives on the last evening of his existence.

One of the least evils arising from this practice is, that other brahmans are compelled to purchase their wives ; and brahman daughters, as other cattle in the market, are vended, according to their beauty, youth, and connexions, at from 200 to 400 rupees a-head.

From the *Kula Shastra* alone (an unorthodox work), we learn the origin of the Kulin.

Ballál Sena, a raja, by descent a sudra, and by birth illegitimate, in the 63d year of his age, (About A. D. 904,) appears to have assembled around him the most reputed of his subjects for wisdom and morality ; and to have dignified those who possessed decision, meekness, learning, character, love of pilgrimage, aversion to bribes, devotion, love of retirement, and liberality, with the appellation of *Kulin* : thus strewing the walks of literature, science, and morality, with the attractions of honour and wealth. Whatever were the

reasons for his conduct, whether we suppose the learning of the age to have been a mere gossamer of sophistry ; and morality, by a continuous ebb, to have left the exhalations of a putrid marsh to poison the intellectual atmosphere, until the energies of the sovereign were required to rescue his people from crime and barbarity ; or whether, taking for our guide the fabled traditions of the times, we admit, that whilst the rest of mankind were sunk in ignorance, India was the only country exalted by wisdom, and that Ballál Sena was nobly ambitious to elevate his subjects still higher in moral excellence ; whatever the circumstances of the age, or the motives of the sovereign, the measure commends itself as calculated to found an empire of knowledge on the ruins of ignorance, give stability by equitable laws to the throne, and encircle so wise a ruler with a halo of glory, which malevolence could not obscure, and which future generations should venerate.

All must regret that the advanced age of Ballál Sena did not permit him to complete his noble design. Had he lived to disrobe of their father's honours those Kulin sons, whom neither paternal example nor the sovereign favour could stimulate to morality ; and to remand individuals so unworthy of their father's distinctions back to poverty and neglect ; he would at its first setting in have arrested a tide of arrogance and wickedness, which without opposition has rolled on through subsequent ages.

To pursue the gradations through which Kulin polygamy obtained its present abominable excess, would neither interest nor profit. Human nature, unbridled, rapidly advances in the path of crime; and the brahman and Kulin, mutually stimulated, this by covetousness and lust, that by fame, would agree to trample down every obstacle to the attainment of their wishes. The Kulin, denuded of moral sensibilities, had much to gain by multiplying his wives; and the brahman, inflated with the pride of exalting his family, forgot the solitudes of a father when, by giving his daughter to the *nominal* embraces of a Kulin, he inclosed her in an iron cage of necessity, damned up the streams of domestic comfort, and consigned her to solitude, worse than that of widowhood: a prey to passions, designed by the beneficent Creator to make her an affectionate wife, and the happy mother of a contented family; but which, by this unnatural custom, as fires smothered up, consumed by slow degrees her constitution, or breaking out into flames, constrained her to fly to illicit intercourse while under the paternal roof, or to the abode and degradation of a prostitute.

Were a census taken of that unhappy class of beings just alluded to, it would perhaps be ascertained that the majority is composed of Hindu females, not by nature more frail, nor by disposition more disposed to go astray, than others; but whose calamity has been to be wedded in infancy to infants like themselves,

and whose husbands died before they had attained the age of manhood ; and who, being bound by their shastras to remain in widowhood, never tasted domestic happiness. After allowing for the disparity of numbers between the Kulin and other tribes, were a second census taken, may we suppose that the majority obtained would be made up of Kulin wives. We cease therefore to wonder, when a Kulin's wife, unless a Kulin born, becomes a mother, that her offspring is regarded as illegitimate ; and fear that a mere tithe of such children arrive at manhood. Neglect, not to say wilful murder, can put a speedy termination to their existence. That the destruction of such infants, however frequent, escapes detection may be accounted for, by the reputed sanctity of a brahman's house, and the seclusion of brahmanis from the rest of mankind. The pregnancy of a brahmani reaches not the ear of a Mussulman neighbour, till after parturition ; but this, if dishonourable, is of course never announced. Should a whisper breathe reproach on a brahman, a Hindu's bosom is the sacred deposit of such scandal ; we may as easily extract water from a flint as elicit the secret from him : veneration for the brahman hermetically seals his lips ; and did it not do so, his caste, his reputation, his livelihood, his family, his home would all be placed in jeopardy by the disclosure. Thus a fountain of iniquity is opened, the streams of which, though concealed from the eye of others, are imbibed

more or less by the whole Hindu race, and demoralize them till, *horribile dictu!* they brutalize the father, debase the mother, mock the bride, prostitute the daughter, and murder the infant.

SELECTIONS.

Pictures of Hindu Manners, by Hindus.—A series of papers has been commenced in the *Englishman*, by a young native gentleman, who has been educated at the Hindu college, on “the domestic manners, habits, usages, and notions of the Hindus.” His first paper is on the Hindu women. His style is exuberant, but his knowledge of facts compensates for this defect.

“However true it may be, that the mighty fabric of ignorance, which had reared itself from time immemorial in this ill-fated land, has begun to dissolve, and the effects of mental illumination are visible in some parts, yet those who have accurately observed the characteristics of the Hindu women, must admit that their condition has been little ameliorated, either in an intellectual or moral point of view. It may be that some of them are endowed with attractive qualities, but that their actions, habits, and principles are grounded upon superstition, and that their tastes and notions of beauty are ludicrous and unrefined, is what appears to me as indubitable as a self-evident proposition. The religious prejudices, which have been

suffered to twine round their mind from infancy, are the bane of every improvement, and can contribute to nothing but the perpetuation of their degraded state. The ridiculous ceremonies which they are taught to observe, and the antiquated customs which they idolize, do not only afford evidences of their inability to reason, but are serious impediments to their ascending in the scale of civilisation.

“ Instead, however, of exhausting here my strictures at once, I would reserve them for proper places, and would, therefore, divide the Hindu women into three heads; *viz.* the unmarried, the married, and the widow.

“ First, then, with regard to the unmarried women. It is, perhaps, known to many, that the Hindu society consists of several castes, almost all of whom have made it a point to get their daughters married before they arrive at the age of puberty; and if in any instance the rule is violated, the Shaster teaches that the fourteen successive ancestors of the parents of the girl, whose marriage is thus neglected, shall have to feel hereafter the horrors of hell, and receive a condign punishment for their crime. The Coolin brahmins do not pay much attention to this ordinance, though it is by their race that it has been fabricated and ushered into the world. In such matters as these, they are more disposed to observe their family distinctions of *kool*, and honour their religious precepts.

They would rather suffer their women to remain unmarried till they are grey with the hoar of years, than submit to marry them to men who are not distinguished Coolins. The happiness of their females is no consideration with them—*kool* being the goal of their ambition and glory. I have been told by some persons, that in these cases, where healthy men for bridegrooms have not been found, the sick and the dying have been selected for the purpose, and many a girl blooming with beauty, and bursting with the flushes of joyous youth, has been dragged to the dreadful verge of the *Shurhan*, and there commanded to celebrate her nuptials with such as were preparing to go to that ‘bourne whence no traveller returns.’ It is, however, a happy thing that the other castes do not follow this hideous practice. They marry their females at their odd years, and always consider the ninth and the eleventh as the marriageable age. But how is the match-making effected in this country? Is it by *free-will* or by *necessity*? Oh, the Hindu females are very wretched in this respect! They are quite strangers to ‘puffs, patches, and *billet-doux*.’ They are cribbed and cabined in kitchens and pigeon-holes, where they busy themselves in combing their locks with molten wax, and admiring their own beauty, having a looking-glass before them. They are not allowed to attend any ball, masquerade, or theatre,

when they might, to see 'Captains, Colonels, or Knights in arms,' or the facetious gentlemen of the bar quibbling with the haughty civilians, and the thoughtful merchants, reciprocating civilities with each other. They have no opportunities of carrying on the *staring* and the *glancing* negotiations of love, or of rustling in silk and satin, in barouches and phaëtons, with men, to try their hearts by the touchstone of conversation. They have no *albums* to inspire any bards, or possess any knowledge of the philosophy of love-making. Marriage, then, by free-will, is quite out of the question. It is their parents who look out for their matches, and, situated as they are, they are compelled by necessity to accede to their wishes. Oh what a capital way of match-making this is! How loudly do the Hindu lads and lasses carry on between them a free-trade in their thoughts and feelings! How unrestrained are their likings and dislikings!

"But let us open the curtains of secrecy at once, and see how they are employed till the hymeneal torch is lighted upon them. Oh, here lies the very marrow and pith of the *tamasha*! Would I had the head of a Cervantes! But vain is that aspiration; so let me jog on in my usual way. The bonny misses of our country are full of fanciful customs. To propitiate the god of death, and prevent his inflicting any punishment hereafter on their parents' brothers, to-be-husbands and their parents, the merciful misses of the Hindoos

dig out every year, in the month of Kartic, small tombs, one cubit long ; and placing around them some statues of clay, as the representatives of those persons, consecrate such tombs to the awful Jumna. This is certainly the most efficacious way of cultivating friendship with the god of death, and securing the means of receiving future rewards ! In the month of Agran, they draw on their terraces sketches of houses, gardens, temples, birds, the images of gods, and all the ornaments used in this country ; and when the bright luminary of the sky pitches his rosy pavilion in the west, they go, then, accompanied by an elderly woman, with some grain and grass in hand, and putting these holy things upon the paintings, one by one, express their wishes and aspirations regarding the married state. Those who have no brothers are taught to form small balls of dung and chaff, and mutter some spells, that their fathers may be soon blessed with sons. The means which they apply to supply their fathers with water hereafter, is by making themselves stand in tanks, in the month of Maug, and not coming home until their brothers go there and bring them by the hand. The precaution which they take against their nails being spoiled by any disease, consists in suffering them to grow for a fortnight, and cutting them in the month of Choitro, in the midst of some married women, who make it their principal business to throw upon the lovers of this custom pots of jaggery and

fruits. The misses are also in the habit of worshipping cows, with pounded turmeric, flowers, grain, and grass, being deeply impressed with a conviction that this will entitle them to go hereafter to the hallowed empire of Krishnu. In addition to these, they perform many other ceremonies of a similar nature, and miserably spend all the days of their youth. The advice which they receive from the brahmins, and the religion which they are taught to profess, are not only detrimental to their imbibing any liberal sentiments, but are totally destructive of any attempts that may be made to awaken in their minds a desire to receive the blessings of knowledge. Such reflections as these are too painful to patriots and philanthropists.

“ The married women of the Hindoos are a set of curious beings. As soon as the nuptial day passes away, their souls become entranced in a multiplicity of pleasures. Then is the time for them to learn all those arts that may heighten their fascinations, and captivate the hearts of their husbands. Then is the time for them to polish their locks with molten wax ; to adorn their noses and foreheads with thick spots of ink and red-lead ; to beautify their persons with powdered turmeric ; to deck their necks with garlands of flowers, and make their lips and teeth, by *meesee*, as black as the wing of a raven. Rose-water, ottar, *mathagossa*,* and a variety of other odoriferous things,

* A fragrant stuff for the hair.

are then lavished, to impregnate their hair with fragrance, and no means remain untried to monopolize all the love and affection of their esteemed lords. In order to combine in them all the charms of beauty, they glow with the ambition to be laden with barbaric pearl and gold, and are seldom found sighing for cheeks of roses, eyes of stars, bosoms of ivory, lips of ruby, voice of cuckoos, or for any other dear object of poetical aspiration, in which the thoughts of many English ladies are absorbed. Nothing can be of greater moment to them than to sparkle in gems and jewels; and as long as they are not decorated from head to toe with all the ornaments of the country, their greedy desires and vexatious requests are unsated. They are always wrapt in black or red bordered *sarees*, usually of ten cubits long, and have nothing to do with trowsers, sashes, gowns, or bonnets. Whenever they have to go to any of their relations' houses, they are sure to be attired in the finest cloths of Dacca, whose gorgeous trimmings loosely flow in the air, while they move all veiled with measured steps. Very few of them are to be found to possess sociality; their flashes of wit degenerate into levity; and the jokes which they crack with each other border in most instances on indecorum and indecency. Those who are capable of reading their vernacular language, amuse themselves sometimes with the voluptuous poems of Bedda-soonder and Chunder-kant; but those who

have no knowledge even of their own alphabets, sadly spend their days and nights with gabbling and gambling.

“ When any girl of a respectable family reaches years of puberty, how hearty are the cheers and congratulations of her parents and relations ! *Gaumláhs*, of a mixture of pounded turmeric and chunam, are being prepared ; the women of the house give up themselves to revelry and merriment, and dirty each other’s clothes with this disagreeable stuff ; messengers are also sent with pots of oil, betel, *altah*,* and other accompaniments of a festive nature, to all the gentlewomen in the circle of their acquaintance, to invite them to witness the celebration of this felicitous event ; and the girl who is the source of this world of pleasure, is instantly put into a sequestered room, in the middle of four split bamboos, two cubits long, placed upon lumps of clay, with slips of dry palm leaves stuck on the tops, and a fine long thread flinging around. A glimmering taper stands before her ; the face of a man she is never permitted to see ; and should she chance to do so while in this state, the life of him who is thus seen is sure to be shortened. The meal which is allowed her to eat, consists of a little quantity of the refuse of rice boiled with milk and jaggery. The sprightliness of youth takes leave of her features, and

* Made of lac dye, sapan-wood, and cotton.

‘ confined and fettered in this penfold,’ there she strives to keep up a frail and feverish being.

“ But when the fifth comes, who does not exclaim, ‘ welcome song and welcome jest?’ An entertainment takes place, when hundreds of the invited ladies — ‘ white, black, and grey, with all their trumpery,’ and clinquant and glittering with magnificent diamonds, emeralds, and rubies,—pour in, in an endless succession, to partake of all the conviviality usual on this joyous occasion. Couches and chairs are placed for them in a large canopied compound, and as soon as they are all seated, a dozen or two of female songsters and tom-tom-beaters are desired to display their proficiency, when these votaries of music become so animated and enthusiastic for fame and glory, that they torment their very throats and hands with excessive bawling and beating. They are generally divided into two parties, each trying to excel the other by the dint of indecent dancing and *cobies*, replete with abominable vulgarity, all of which is perhaps considered as the food of love. After this *tamasha* is over, the nearest relations of the imprisoned girls perform a dramatic piece. A representation of a tank is made, near which one of them sits, ‘ high on a throne of royal state,’ while the others, as her aides-de-camp and constables, wait around. But the play becomes a dull monotonous thing, and appears more like a colloquial twaddle than any thing else. There is no pro-

cession or cavalcade ; no march of soldiers, no flourish of trumpets, no battle of heroes, no sacking of towns, nor the assassination of kings. These lovely amateurs are not fond of such theatrical charms as these. What tickles their fancy the most is, to spurn the dim horizon of probability at once, and wander unconfined in the regions of delusion. They assume that the girl, in commemoration of whose maturity the feast is given, is ‘ as ladies love to be who love their lords.’ They here bawl out a rigmarole, ‘ full of sound and fury, signifying nothing,’ and bringing before them a thick piece of stone (*Nora*), they simultaneously raise a cry, ‘ lo ! here appears the wished-for son !’ One of them then plays the part of a midwife, while the female songsters resume their songs, and the whole stage rings with joy and benediction. The hour of entertainment then draws on apace, and the facetious invited ladies, sitting cross-legged on the floor, regale themselves at last with a variety of sweetmeats. But as the day steeps itself in the soft shades of twilight, the throng disperses ; all the pomp and parade fade in a total evanescence, and the place, which was but half-an-hour ago the receptacle of beings ‘ breathing such divine, enchanting ravishment,’ grows dark and looks like a cloudy sky bereft of its stars. In the course of a few days, a very important ceremony is performed. The happy girl and her husband are taken to an open place of the lower part of the inner department,

where a barber is desired to cut the nails and adorn the feet of the young lady with the red streaks of *altah*. They then beautify their persons with the powdered turmeric and oil, and after bathing, in a little spot surrounded with four plantain trees, get themselves dressed in *bhalees* of deep crimson hue. The young gentleman puts on his head a light white hat of conical shape (*topore*), and stands encircling with his hand the breast of his 'bosom friend,' whose veil glitters with a quadrangular ornament of *sola*, and is suffered to descend, as a mark of modesty, no less than two cubits long. Such a spectacle as this never fails to draw near it a concourse of men and women; among whom the matrons of the house come forward before these tender objects of their affection, and wish them joy and prosperity, by a variety of contortions of their hands, and shaking before them, every now and then, a brass-plate of diversified cones, formed of pounded rice, lamp-black, and red-lead. After an observance of these rites, the happy pair are conducted to an adjoining room, where a couple of family brahmins (*poorohits*) seat themselves on pieces of *ahsones*, and having before them flowers, grass, grain, *pootees*, and *bosas* and *bosees*,—the implements of religious warfare,—commence chanting lots of *munters* to reunite this young girl and young esquire with the ties of marriage. The ceremony is hence denominated *poonooibaho*, or marriage celebrated again, and has originated from a notion, that, when a girl attains

to womanhood, she is no longer immaculate, and must be a different being from what she was.

“ But let us come to the epilogue of this farce. As soon as the chattering of the brahmins is over, and the flowers with sandal are flung around, the happy pair stand close to each other in the midst of a number of spectators. Here the young gentleman performs the part of a lover ; but not by ‘ sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad, made to his mistress’ eyebrow.’ In obedience to the injunction of the holy Shaster, he partially undresses his beloved wife, and placing his hand with a golden ring upon her abdomen for a few moments, heroically throws it on the ground. Should this ring fall on the right side, it would be a sure prognostication of their having a son as their first issue ; but if on the left, a daughter. When the celebration of this *poonoobibaho* comes to a close, their wearing apparel is tied together ; a number of statues made of pounded rice are held before them as their to-be-progeny, and, as they go up stairs, the wife throws away all her fictitious sons one by one, while the husband, regardful of these serious losses, busily saves them from being crushed to death. They then come and sit down on a musnud, and spend a little time at playing of *bowries* ; but when night advances on her ebony car, and the sky, all serene and blue, ‘ seems like an ocean hung on high,’ how rapturous must be the emotions of this happy pair !”

“The liberal party consists of a small class of juvenile Hindoos, almost all of whom have been educated either at the Hindoo College or at Mr. Hare’s school. When they first began to learn the English language, the system of education then pursued in those institutions was in a great measure inefficient in properly developing their moral or intellectual energies, and the only improvement which they had made for some years in their studies was in acquiring the geographical position of different countries, cities, rivers, mountains, islands, and peninsulas; in learning the particulars of some events relative to ancient and modern history, the respective rules of arithmetic, algebra, and drawing, and in being able to recite some pieces from Shakspeare, Pope, Milton, and Campbell. The teachers, in whose charge they were, had sadly neglected the entire cultivation of their hearts, and consequently they were for some time not a bit better than their countrymen in point of morality. But when Mr. Derozio was appointed an assistant-teacher at the Hindoo College, he introduced wonderful innovations into the former method of instruction. It was he that first awakened in the minds of his pupils a curiosity and a thirst for knowledge. It was he who thought it his principal duty to refine their feelings. It was he that roused them to think for themselves. It was he that gave them solid instruction in the shape of entertainment; and it was he that enraptured them

with the sublimest precepts. The liberals have the good of their country at heart, and always cherish friendly feelings towards their countrymen. The virtues which they practise are really of an exalted nature. There is nothing in the world which they hate more than falsehood—hypocrisy and double-dealing. That the world is full of dishonesty, is a deplorable subject to them. In dealings of all sorts, they are exceedingly fair. They are great lovers of flat truths and straight-forward conduct. The respect which they have for men is in proportion to the respect which they have for truth, and unless an individual, be he an European, an East-Indian, a Mahometan, or a Hindoo, unites to his talent a regard for character, they think it beneath their dignity to cultivate any acquaintance with him. To many of the Europeans they would most candidly yield in profundity of erudition, but certainly to none in an adherence to uprightness. The principles which they have imbibed are all based upon the excellent doctrines of morality. Notions of English honour and independence have been infused into their minds. Sycophancy and adulation they detest, and would consider it the greatest degradation imaginable to flatter a man, however great he may be. Their manners do not possess the least tincture of servility—‘a breath of submission they breathe not,’ and the spirit with which they are imbued to signalize themselves by honest industry, a constant attention to the

interests of their country, a due deference to the opinions of their inferiors, and by cool deliberation in all the circumstances of their lives, speaks highly of their disposition, highly of their understanding, and highly of the *Alma mater* where they have received their education. The aristocracy of the civilians, the professions of the Calcutta people, and the corruption of men in many of the public offices, are the themes of their constant conversation. The man who does more in action than in speech merits their veneration; but he that talks a great deal about reformation, patriotism, philanthropy, freedom, enlightenment, civilisation, and a catalogue of those lofty, pompous, and studied expressions, which often resound, amidst claps, cheers, and shouts, in the spacious lower story of the Town Hall, is considered either a knave or fool. In matters of politics, they are all radicals, and are followers of Benthamitic principles. The very word *Tory* is a sort of ignominy among them. Reformation, they say, ought to be effected in every age and country; and as to what respects the state of India, her condition ought surely to be reformed. They think that this country is labouring under a number of political evils, which cry aloud for a speedy removal. With the administration of Lord William Bentinck and Sir Charles Metcalfe they are very much satisfied, and when they reflect on those glorious acts of theirs—the prevention of the burning of suttees, the elevation of native cha-

racter, the dispensing with the invidious distinction of caste, creed, or colour, the emancipation of the press, the abolition of transit duties, and the establishment of the Medical College—they really feel an inexpressible delight, and cannot but be sanguine in their anticipations, that the harrowing aspect of India will soon melt away, and a scene of beauty and magnificence brighten her face. They think that toleration ought to be practised by every government, and the best and surest way of making the people abandon their barbarous customs and rites, is by diffusing education among them. With respect to the questions relative to Political Economy, they all belong to the school of Adam Smith. They are clearly of opinion that the system of monopoly, the restraints upon trade, and the international laws of many countries, do nothing but paralyze the efforts of industry, impede the progress of agriculture and manufacture, and prevent commerce from flowing in its natural course. The science of mind is also their favourite study. The philosophy of Dr. Reid, Dugald Stewart, and Thomas Brown, being perfectly of a Baconian nature, comes home, ‘to their business and bosom.’ The frivolous discussions, which abound in the works of many ancient as well as modern writers, have, they say, tended to produce more harm than good. They have a literary club, known as the Academic Association. It is held every Saturday night at Mr. Hare’s school, where

they discuss all sorts of moral, metaphysical, historical, and political questions."

* * * *

"The bigotted natives have a very mean opinion of agricultural occupations. To till the ground or touch the plough is considered a sort of degradation. Commerce is also foreign to the views of many of them. What they esteem honourable is, the being in the service of a judge, a collector, or a commissioner, as a sarrishtadar, or of an opulent merchant as a banian ; and unless they can make thousands and lacs very soon, they are never designated clever expert baboos. The zemindary line is also a great object of their ambition ; for what can be more flattering to their vanity than to sit in their own talooks, surrounded by gomushtas, naeks, and pikes, and issue orders and hookooms against the ryots, like a big-bellied justice Saheb ! To frequent Adawluts, and to be deeply versed in the intricacies of courts, must be the necessary qualifications of every landholder ; and he who is not sharp enough in concocting machinations for the speedy acquisition of his fortune, often passes for a dull, stupid fool. When they are engaged in any law-suit, either in the Supreme or Mofussil courts, they will exert their utmost to succeed in it."

A Hindu correspondent, in a Calcutta paper, gives

the following account of the absurd ceremonies at his own marriage:—

“As I returned from school, one day, my brother asked if I had taken leave from the school for a week or two. I answered in the negative, and said I knew of no reason why I should take leave. ‘No reason!’ cried my brother, ‘why is not your marriage a sufficient one?’—‘My marriage!’ said I, in surprise. ‘Yes; this day week has been fixed for your marriage.’ Astonished that all this had been done without my knowing, I began to remonstrate; but there was no remedy. They had settled in writing, and given the pledge to conclude the ceremony. The next day, I was rubbed with turmeric and oil, that my beauty would be increased. For four or five days before the marriage, I was in this condition, and was made to dine at more than two dozen of places each day, where I was invited to eat for the last time in the capacity of a bachelor. I had with me all this time a pair of nut-crackers, which was to be my arms in opposing the charms of the fair devils, who might all be captivated with my beauty, and who, therefore, might be inclined to decoy me into labyrinths and windings. The day of marriage comes; I was made to bathe at a place encircled with a line of thread, and having four branches of a plantain tree fixed as the limits of my bath, I was obliged to fast the whole day, and was, through extreme pain, tempted to call marriage a curse and

not a blessing to man. The evening approached ; I was dressed in red, and had a long cap made of light wood on my head. I marched and got into my palan-keen ; the palankeen went slowly, and all our friends and guests walked by my sides to the place, which I was taught to consider as the house of my father-in-law, I was led into the *mujlish*. The moment I sat down, I was obliged to cut a little nut into two parts with the nutcracker, which was my shield against the charms of the fair devils. This being a night of joy, several of my brothers-in-law-to-be were throwing brick-bats, brick-dust, and other materials, against me, and the persons who came with me, and thereby expressing their pleasant humours. One of these stones broke down my long cap : this enraged my soldiers (for the persons that came with me were so called), and they returned the courtesy by discharging small bricks and stones. Thus the two armies—the one mine, the other my wife's-to-be—in their joyous humour, fought with some violence, and did not stop till several were actually benumbed by the strokes. About this time, I was conducted into the inner department of the house. What a severe ceremony I had at this time to perform ! I was made to stand at a place surrounded on every side by the women of the house, who were also in a joyous humour. Starving, shaking with cold, for this was in winter, and my body was actually made bare, fearing every moment the force of the joy in

which the women around me were, without my army to defend me, I was in a dreadful situation. I could scarcely stand, when one of my fair opponents, more cheerful than the rest, pulled my ear; I took up my hand to defend it, when a second pulled my other ear; not long after, a third gave me a strong blow upon my neck.

“From the extreme severities inflicted upon me I became desperately angry, and began with both my hands to strike all around me, and thereby put them to flight. My mother-in-law now came to conclude the ceremony, during which a female child, of about three years of age was brought on a wooden board and made to revolve seven times around me. This child, I heard afterwards, was my wife.”

The *Enquirer* (conducted by a converted Hindu) gives the following details of the ceremony of initiating a Brahmin into the priesthood :—

“When a Brahmin lad is about nine or ten years old, a particular day is appointed for giving him his badge. Two or three days before this, his friends rub him all over with oil and turmeric, with a view to beautify his person, and when by this means he becomes a pattern of beauty in their sight, they advise him to take great care that evil spirits, allured by his personal attractions, may not haunt him. To make him as safe as possible, they recommend him

to keep always with him a piece of iron, which would act against the secret workings of *bhoots*. He remains in this cautious manner until the morning of the day appointed for this ceremony, when a barber shaves off the whole of his hair, and bores his ears with two sharp pins. A friend or relation then gives offerings to the manes of his departed forefathers, and satisfies their hunger and thirst. The young lad then sits down to have his ceremony performed on a wicker mat (*kooshashun*), and gives oblations to all the gods and goddesses. Offerings of ghee and small twigs of a tree (*jugnodoomber*) are made to Brumha, the god of fire, by being thrown into a flaming furnace. All this over, and numerous other oblations and offerings being done, the young Brahmin receives a wicker *poita*, which, however, is soon after thrown away, and another of cotton thread, with a small piece of hide affixed to it, given to him. This likewise is thrown away shortly after, and the mystical *poita*, with mystical knots, is given to him. Having thus received his badge, the young Brahmin walks over to a particular room, with a stick in his hand, and receives presents from his friends and relations. In this room he must be shut up for about eleven days, and avoid looking at the face of an inferior caste. If he ever finds it necessary to come out, he must throw a veil over his face, that nobody might either see him or be seen by him. During this period of confinement,

his meal is very simple—nothing but rice and some boiled vegetable, not dressed with salt, or oil, or spices. When the period of this confinement is over, his friends take him to the Ganges one morning before sunrise, and there make him throw into the river the stick which he had received on the day of the ceremony. He is then a Brahmin, entitled to all the privileges of a priest.”

Native Character by Europeans.—It is lamentable to observe, that, after having so long held India, we have made no definite impression on native society. Notwithstanding the compliments which pass and repass between Calcutta and Leadenhall-street, it is a fact, which no man acquainted with the country will deny, that the British government in India has neither produced any ameliorating change in the *people*, nor adopted any measures which might lead to the hope that the foundation of such a change had been laid, and that time only was required to develope it. We have wrought no improvement in India in the remotest degree correspondent with the extent of our own acquirements, or the advantages which we have long enjoyed in the country. We have protected the country from foreign enemies ; and this is, we fear, nearly the sum and substance of our achievements. But we owed this to our dignity, peace, and character ; other duties, which we owed to the country, we have

yet to think of. The benefits which the natives have derived from our own advent, have arisen simply from the *existence* of a powerful and vigorous administration among them ; from any exertions of that administration, the intellectual condition of the people has obtained no benefit. Burke, in a strain of bitter invective, said, half a century ago, " Were we to be driven out of India this day, nothing would remain to tell that it had been possessed, during the inglorious period of our dominion, by any thing better than the orang-outang or the tiger." The censure is now inapplicable ; but it may be said, with the strictest truth, that, if we were this day driven out of India, there would not remain any thing to testify that it had been held for seventy years, in undisputed sovereignty, by the most active and civilized people on earth. In fact, the entire structure and complexion of our government appear utterly unadapted for making any permanent, civilizing impression on the mass of the people ; for laying deep the foundations of new institutions, calculated to elevate the natives. Every thing about our government is transient and fugitive ; there is nothing permanent. The scene flits before the eyes of the natives, and the actors appear and disappear on the stage with all the rapidity of dramatic representation. From the highest to the lowest officer, we see nothing but perpetual change. No sooner do the natives begin to understand the

character of a governor-general, and the governor-general to understand them and their country, than he removes to his native land, and is succeeded by another, who has no sooner completed the term of his "apprenticeship," and become initiated in the craft and mystery of Indian government, than he also disappears. The same principle of change pervades all the subordinate offices. Take the civil stations all round, and it will be found that the functionaries are changed about every three years. In scarcely a single instance, is there time for a judge, magistrate, or collector to become intimately acquainted with the people under him. He seems always in a hurry to be gone, first from one place to another, and eventually from India to England. Is it possible that any permanent institutions for the benefit of India can be founded and matured, in so changing a scene?

A writer in the *Calcutta Courier*, treating upon the education of the natives, expresses himself thus: "What, then, is the proximate cause of the want of improvement and nearly stationary condition of India? What can it be but the comparative indolence and want of enterprize characteristic of the people? But whence comes this indifference? Does it exist where a *certain* and *immediate* prospect of advantage lies open to their perception? This can scarcely be said. The inactivity complained of must, therefore, origi-

nate, in a great measure at least, in the want of a full and distinct understanding of the advantage of pushing enterprise into other than the customary channels. And how is it that such perception is wanting? Custom, long and deeply-rooted, prejudice, and ignorance (connected no doubt, in part, with the physical character of the people, but attributable still more to the nature and effects,—which have been operating for ages—of the religion they profess and the civil institutions arising from it), have obscured the reasoning powers of the nation, and blunted the measure of ingenuity which they undoubtedly possess, so as to debar them from the attainment of just principles in philosophy, from the discovery of truth in the sciences, and as a consequence, in some degree necessary, from a knowledge of the simplest and most effectual processes in the mechanical and other arts. In the meanwhile, the almost total want of intercourse with more enlightened foreigners, until a recent period, rendered it impossible that the valuable knowledge, of which,—as long experience had shewn,—there were no indigenous germs, could be introduced from other quarters. The ultimate principle, it appears, then, to which we are conducted by this analysis, is the ignorance of the people, which disables them from perceiving, and profiting by, those means of bettering their condition and augmenting the national wealth, which their interest would otherwise render them

quick to seize upon and turn to advantage. What, then, are those agents which would operate most powerfully in advancing the civilisation of India, of which its people are yet ignorant? and by what obstacles are they prevented from becoming acquainted with, and availing themselves of them? These questions would lead to a wide discussion. In the mean time, they can only be answered briefly and partially.

“ A knowledge of the principles of science and their application to the arts, is the particular agent, in the improvement of this country, which it is at present intended to insist on. The consideration of the means by which such a knowledge could be imparted, is closely connected with the general subject of education. The preparation of books in the vernacular tongues, on the principles of the several sciences most applicable to the common purposes of life, and on the practice of the most extensively useful arts, would be one important means of disseminating the required information ; but still more important, nay absolutely essential, towards the attainment of the end here proposed (*viz.* the excitement of a desire to know and to employ improved methods in the arts), is the appointment of practical professors at each of the large cities of Hindoosthan, to instruct the most intelligent artisans of all descriptions, especially young men, in the theory and practice of the simplest and most effectual processes in their several departments. No

body of men, especially a people in the situation of the Hindoos and other inhabitants of this country, can be expected to innovate largely without the expectation, nay, the clear prospect, of some tangible profit. A measure like that just indicated, the operation of which, by displaying to them the palpable and material advantages of improvement in knowledge, would strongly attract them to its acquisition, and would, therefore, undoubtedly prove an effectual agent in advancing the civilization of the nation. A perception of the vast benefits of knowledge in a material point of view, as well as the improvements so effected by its agency, would, in the natural course of things, introduce a higher order of civilisation, and promote the cultivation of knowledge, in all its departments, for its own sake."

The anxiety of the natives to obtain situations under Government seems to be out of all proportion to the amount of the salaries attached to them. Even where the pay is contemptibly insignificant, there is the most eager competition for them, and men of the most respectable and wealthy families in the country scruple at no means to obtain them. These official posts appear valuable in their eyes, from the dignity and standing which they give in society, and from the opening which they afford for indirect gains to an unlimited extent. A good situation in the judicial, reve-

nual, or commercial line is moreover considered as a provision for a whole family, since a native who may have obtained one always pushes his own relatives into every employment within his reach. A flock of hungry, needy connexions attends on his movements, to seize upon these posts as they fall vacant; and however the right of presentation to them may belong to the European functionary at the head of the office, the patronage does, some how or other, invariably fall to the disposal of some native on his establishment, who has contrived to make himself useful or necessary. To the attainment of this great object, that of subjecting their European master to their own influence, the uninterrupted attention of the most ambitious natives in the office is constantly directed; and, sooner or later, their efforts are crowned with success. They lead, by appearing always to follow. It is quite amusing to see, as is often the case, a European functionary, of firmness and integrity, boasting of his own complete independence of all the natives around him, while at the same time every thing is eventually done exactly as his influential native servant desires. A native, who has thus succeeded in obtaining the ear and the confidence of his master, enjoys, therefore, in addition to the dignity and emoluments of his own station, the patronage of almost all the inferior situations in the department. It is also a fact worthy of note, that the public situations of Government, which

are filled by natives, carry with them a very large share of influence, more especially in the country. In England, a country gentleman of large property and of an ancient family, enjoys far more consideration than a simple justice of the peace, or an ordinary functionary of Government. In this land of sycophancy, it is generally the reverse; a subordinate native officer of the court, or of the collectorate, enjoys greater distinction in many parts of the country than a wealthy zemindar. His opinions carry more weight; his example extends to a wider range, and he exercises a more decided influence upon the opinions and practice of the people. It is, therefore, not surprising that posts in the public service, even where the stipulated salary does not exceed twenty or thirty rupees monthly, should be considered as valuable prizes, and eagerly sought after by natives of every rank and denomination.—*Friend of India*, Nov. 19, 1835.

Mrs. Farrar thus relates one of her visits to a principal family at Nassuck:—

“ A Brahmin promised he would one day introduce me to his wife. He invited me to meet her and a number of Brahmin ladies, who assembled at his house to perform some ceremony in honour of Parvati, the wife of Siva. I did not approve of the occasion of the meeting: but idolatrous ceremonies are thus interwoven

in all their intercourse. I told my Brahmin host, in presence of his friends, that, though I was come by his invitation to visit his wife, I hoped it was understood that I paid no respect to the idolatrous ceremony ; because I did not believe in their gods. He said that was fully understood.

“ But I was disappointed in the object of my visit : the women all kept aloof from me, as from a being of another species. I claimed the Brahmin’s promise, to introduce me to his wife, and beckoned to her, but she disliked to approach me. I rose to meet her ; when the Brahmin exclaimed, ‘ Oh, mind you do not touch her ! ’ She drew her garment over her face ; and, perceiving they were all afraid of pollution, I expressed a hope that another day we might have an opportunity of becoming better acquainted, and withdrew.

“ We had again an invitation from our friend the Brahmin. Mrs. Mitchell and I went. The Brahmin assured us, that the only reason why the ladies would not converse with us was, that they were not accustomed to do so with strangers in presence of the master of the house. I therefore, as politely as I could, requested him either to withdraw, or to allow us to go with the ladies into another apartment. He kindly consented to leave us alone with them ; and I was much gratified to find them ready to converse freely. They asked me many questions ; one of the first was, Why we wore no ornaments ? I said it was not our

custom ; and that our *Shaster* taught us that a woman should be adorned with good works, rather than with gold or silver. A great deal of the conversation turned upon ornaments, a favourite subject among Mahratta ladies. They asked also, if, among us, widows were permitted to marry again. The Brahminees seem more intelligent than other women ; and it is far easier to converse with them than with the other castes, as they use the same kind of expressions which we learn from the pundit and from books.

“ The Hindoo females are immoderately fond of outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold ; and this taste seems to be instilled into them from their earliest years. I asked a little girl, who was reading to me about the hare, Why it had long ears ? She unhesitatingly replied, ‘ To wear plenty of earrings.’ The pundit remarked, that, were the nether-millstone a gem, the females of his nation would hang it about their necks. But personal cleanliness seldom seems to enter into their idea of beauty ; plenty of gold and silver bangles, with pearls and gems, is the height of their ambition and admiration !

“ A painful circumstance has occurred in the school. We had a very interesting girl about sixteen years old : she is clever, and had learned to read before any of the others. I was in hopes that she might soon be useful in the school, and thus have an opportunity of gaining a comfortable and honest maintenance. I had

held out this prospect to her ; but a few days ago, I found that the wretched girl had been married to an idol ; that is, dedicated to the service of the temple, and devoted to prostitution. I sent for the mother and daughter, and implored them not to throw away their own souls. I offered to take the girl into our service, and to maintain her : the poor child seemed willing to comply, but the mother was inexorable. It had cost her, she said, five thousand rupees to devote this victim to the gods: she is now their property, and the wages of her iniquity support the family. I said, ‘How can you, her mother, bear to give up your own child to shame and everlasting contempt?’ She answered, ‘She has been married to the gods : among us, there is no shame attached to the practice.’”—*Miss. Reg., March, 1836.*

The Hindu Theatre.—The *Hindu Pioneer*, a native periodical work, commenced at Calcutta in 1835, gives the following account of “a Native Theatre.”

“This private theatre, got up about two years ago, is still supported by Bábu Nobinchandar Bose. It is situated in the residence of the proprietor, at Shám Bá-zár, where four or five plays are acted during the year. These are native performances, by people entirely Hindus, after the English fashion, in the vernacular language of their country ; and what elates us with joy, as it should do all the friends of Indian improvement, is, that the fair sex of Bengal are always seen

on the stage, as the female parts are almost exclusively performed by Hindu women.

“ We had the pleasure of attending at a play one evening during the last full moon; and we must acknowledge that we were highly delighted. The house was crowded by upwards of a thousand visitors, of all sorts, Hindus, Mahammadans, and some Europeans and East-Indians, who were equally delighted. The play commenced a little before twelve o'clock, and continued, the next day, till half-past six in the morning. We were present from the beginning, and witnessed almost the whole representation, with the exception of the last two scenes. The subject of the performance was *Bidya Sundar*. It is tragic-comic, and one of the master-pieces in Bengáli, by the celebrated Bhárut Chandar. The play is commonly known by every person who can read a little Bengáli; yet, for the sake of our English readers, we must observe, that this play is much like that of *Romeo and Juliet* in Shakspeare. It commenced with the music of the orchestra, which was very pleasing. The native musical instruments, such as the *silár*, the *sáranghi*, the *pakhwáz*, and others, were played by Hindus, almost all Bráhmans. Among them the violin was admirably managed by Bábu Brajonáth Gosháin, who received frequent applauses from the surrounding visitors; but, unfortunately, he was but imperfectly heard by the assembly. Before the curtain was drawn, a prayer

was sung to the Almighty, a Hindu custom in such ceremonies, and prologues were chaunted likewise, previous to the opening of every scene, explaining the subject of the representation. The scenery was generally imperfect: the perspective of the pictures, the clouds, the waters, were all failures; they denoted both want of taste and sacrifice of judicious principles; and the latter were scarcely distinguished except by the one being placed above the other. Though framed by native painters, they would have been much superior had they been executed by careful hands. The house of Rájá Bira Singha, and the apartment of his daughter, were, however, done tolerably well. The part of Sundar, the hero of the poem, was played by a young lad, Shámácharn Bánarji, of Barranagore, who, in spite of his praiseworthy efforts, did not do entire justice to his performance. It is a character which affords sufficient opportunity to display theatrical talents by the frequent and sudden change of pantomime, and by playing such tricks as to prevent the Rájá, who is the father of the heroine of the play, from detecting the amorous plot. Young Shámácharn tried occasionally to vary the expression of his feelings, but his gestures seemed to be studied, and his motions stiff. The parts of the Rájá and others were performed to the satisfaction of the whole audience. The female characters, in particular, were excellent. The part of Bidyá (daughter of Rájá Bira Singha), the lover of

Sundar, was played by Rádhá Moni (generally called Moni), a girl of nearly sixteen years of age, and was very ably sustained; her graceful motions, her sweet voice, and her love-tricks with Sundar, filled the minds of the audience with rapture and delight. She never failed as long as she was on the stage. The sudden change of her countenance amidst her joys and her lamentations, her words so pathetic, and her motions so truly expressive, when informed that her lover was detected, and when he was dragged before her father, were highly creditable to herself and to the stage. When apprised that Sundar was ordered to be executed, her attendants tried in vain to console her; she dropped down and fainted, and, on recovering, through the care of her attendants, fell senseless again, and the audience was left for some time in awful silence. That a person, uneducated as she is, and unacquainted with the niceties of her vernacular language, should perform a part so difficult with general satisfaction, and receive loud and frequent applause, was, indeed, quite unexpected. The other female characters were equally well performed, and, amongst the rest, we must not omit to mention that the part of the Rani, or wife of Rájá Bira Singha, and that of Málini (a name applied to women who deal in flowers), were acted by an elderly woman, Jay Durgá, who did justice to both characters; in the two-fold capacity, she eminently appeared amongst the other performers, and delighted

the hearers with her songs; and another woman, Raj Cumari, usually called Rájú, played the part of a maid-servant to Bidya, if not in a superior manner, yet as able as Jay Durgá.

“We rejoice that, in the midst of ignorance, such examples are produced, which are beyond what we could have expected. Ought not the very sight of these girls induce our native visitors present on this occasion to spare no time in educating their wives and daughters?”

The *Englishman* states, on the authority of a well-informed correspondent, that, so far from these Hindu theatricals being attended with any advantage, moral or intellectual, to the Hindus, “it behoves every friend to the people to discourage such exhibitions, which are equally devoid of novelty, utility and even decency. A correspondent has lifted the veil with which the writer of the sketch sought to screen the real character of these exhibitions, and we hope we shall hear no more of them in the *Hindu Pioneer*, unless it be to denounce them.”

Anglomania.—Saiyud Keramut Ali, now second Sudder Amin, under the superintendent, at Ajmir, in Rajpootana, has amused the public there by his staunch Anglomania. Having imbibed a taste for several European customs, during his intercourse with Englishmen, he set up a chair and table in the hall of justice, at which he presided on the opening of the

Ajmir term time, with all the gravity of a judge of the Court of King's Bench, sitting on the *nisi prius* side, at the Assizes. On taking up a case, however, one of the vakeels, a Mahomedan, refused to plead standing. The saiyud remained firm in defending the strength of his position and principle. The vakeel then went off to Mr. Edmonstone, before whom he protested that he and all the rest of the advocates would throw up their gowns, if the new judge was upheld in his innovations. Mr. Edmonstone, who knows too well that lawyers are the last article likely to be inconveniently scarce in any market, replied quietly, that the vakeels might please themselves about continuing practice, but that he thought too much respect could not be paid to any seat of justice, and the more any officer of Government under him modelled his sittings on English rule, the firmer would be the fundamental principles of judicial administration. As soon as the result of the appeal became known, the gentlemen of the Ajmir bar hastened to disown the offended member, who had acted as the mouth-piece of the body. The senior Sudder Amin lost no time in following Keramut Ali's example, and the practice may now be considered a settled one.—*Agra Ukbar*, June 25, 1836.

Mendicity in India.—Beggars in this country so easily get a living, that all sorts of idle and loose cha-

racters enlist themselves as such, and prowl about the streets, extorting unwilling charity. Several causes have tended to bring about this state of circumstances. The natural fertility of the land leading to an abundance of produce, labour is held cheap, as the means of supporting life are found without difficulty. The religion and manners of the people inculcating charity as a virtue of the first order, there are not wanting idle men to avail themselves of the pretence; and so we have different organized bands of mendicants, who regularly feed and fatten upon public alms. In fact, the success of these men is so great, that we do not wonder to see men, who were labourers at one time, turn into regular beggars. The Byragees, Bostoms, and Synnashees, who infest the streets of Calcutta, are a great nuisance to the people of the metropolis. Besides these, we have regular frequenters of marriages, shrauds, and festivals of all kinds, who are such sturdy villains, that they do not scruple to use every means, persuasion, intreaty, threat, and abuse, by turns, for the purpose of extortion. Brahmins are found in greater proportion among beggars than any other caste of men; and when such a wretch besets us, it is not until after he has exhausted every term in the beggar's vocabulary, be it to persuade, to soften, or to threat, to bring down blessings on the head of us and ours, or to shower down curses and damnation, that he will leave us.—*Gyananneshun, April 6, 1836.*

Infanticide.—The *Calcutta Christian Observer* for November, 1835, contains a statement of the efforts (hitherto but partially successful) made by an active and benevolent public officer (Col. Pottinger) in the province of Cutch, to put down female infanticide :

“ When he first came to Cutch, ten years ago, he set out, with all the active zeal of a new comer, to root out the practice ; but he soon discovered his mistake. The mehtahs sent at his request, by the then regency, were either cajoled by false returns, or expelled from towns and villages, not only by the classes charged with the crime, but by the other inhabitants, whom long habit had taught to view the business with indifference, if not absolute approbation. Col. P. next got the darbár to summon all the Jarejahs to Bhúj, and partly by threats, and partly persuasion, arranged with them to furnish quarterly statements of the births within their respective estates. This plan he saw, from the outset, was defective ; but it was the best he could hit upon at the moment. It proved, however, an utter failure. Within six months, most of the Jarejahs declared their inability to act up to their agreement, even as far as regarded their nearest relations. Several fathers, for instance, assured him, that they *dared not* establish such a scrutiny regarding their grown-up sons ; and the few statements that were furnished, he found to have been drawn by guess-work, from what may be termed the tittle-tattle of the village.

Col. P.'s next idea was, that as all the Jarejahs profess to be blood relations of the Rao of Cutch, they might be requested to announce to him, as the head of the tribe, as well as Government, the fact of their wives being '*enceintes*,' and eventually the result. This scheme appeared feasible to the ministers; but when it was proposed to the Jarejah members of the regency, they received it with feelings of complete disgust, and almost horror. Two modes further suggested themselves of carrying the object. The one, to use direct authority and force; but that would, no doubt, be at variance with the spirit, if not the letter, of the treaty. The other, to grant a portion to every Jarejah girl on her marriage. This latter method had been proposed to the Bombay Government by Col. P.'s predecessor (Mr. Gardiner), but had been explicitly negatived, and that negative had been confirmed by the Court of Directors. Under these circumstances, the plan was, of course, abandoned.

"Sir John Malcolm came to Bhuj in March, 1820. He made a long speech to the assembled Jarejahs on the enormity of the crime, and told them, the English nation would force the East-India Company to dissolve all connexion with a people who persisted in it! The Jarejahs, of course, individually denied the charge; but they afterwards inquired from Col. P., how the Governor could talk so to them, at a moment when he was courting the friendship of Sinde, in which child-

murder is carried to a much greater extent than even in Cutch; for it is a well-known fact, that all the illegitimate offspring born to men of any rank, in that country, are indiscriminately put to death, without reference to sex. Subsequently to Sir John's visit, an impostor, of the name of Vijjya Bhat, went to Bombay, and presented a petition to Government, setting forth Col. P.'s supineness, and offering, if furnished with some peons, to do all that was required. This petition was referred to the colonel to report on, which he did as it merited; and matters lay in abeyance, till the young Rao was installed in July, 1834, when he adopted the most decided steps to enforce that article of the treaty which provides for the suppression of infanticide. He took a paper from the whole of his brethren, reiterating that stipulation, and agreeing to abide the full consequences if they broke it. Col. P. officially promised the Rao the support of the British Government in all his measures, and the Rao and the English resident have been watching ever since for an occasion to make a signal example; but the difficulty of tracing and bringing home such an allegation will be understood from the preceding account; and it would be ruin to the cause to attempt to do so on uncertain grounds, and fail. It now, however, appears that our best, perhaps only, chance of success rests with the Rao, who is most sincere in his detestation of the crime, and his wish to stop it.

“ Our correspondent proceeds as follows:—

“ ‘ The assertion made by Mr. Wilkinson, that infanticide is carried to an extent of which we have hardly yet a complete notion, is, alas! too true in India. The Rao of Cutch told the resident at his court, very recently, that he had just found out, that a tribe of Musalmáns, called Summas, who came originally from Sinde, and now inhabit the islands in the Runn, paying an ill-defined obedience to Cutch, put *all* their daughters to death, merely to save the expense and trouble of rearing them! He has taken a bond from all the heads of the tribe to abandon the horrid custom; but, as he justly remarked, he has hardly the means of enforcing it. Of the origin of infanticide in Cutch, it is difficult to give a satisfactory account. The tradition of its being a scheme hit on by one of the Jarejahs, to prevent their daughters, who cannot marry in their own tribe, from disgracing their families by prostitution, is generally received. The Jarejahs of Cutch have adopted all the vices, whilst they have few or none of the saving qualities, of the Musalmáns. No people appear to have so thorough a contempt for women; yet, strange to say, we often see the dowagers of households taking the lead in both public and private matters amongst them. Their tenets are, however, that women are innately vicious; and it must be confessed that they have good cause to draw this conclusion in Cutch, in which, it is

suspected, there is not one chaste female, from the Rao's wives downwards. We can understand the men amongst the Jarejahs getting reconciled to infanticide, from hearing it spoken of, from their very births, as a necessary and laudable proceeding; but several instances have been told me, where young mothers, just before married from other tribes, and even brought from distant countries, have strenuously urged the destruction of their own infants, even in opposition to the father's disposition to spare them! This is a state of things for which, we confess, we cannot offer any explanation, and which would astonish us in a tigress or a she-wolf!"

A correspondent of the *Bombay Gazette* of April 6, 1835, on the faith of a letter from Ahmednuggur, states the following horrible transaction:

"It is distressing to relate, that, for these few days past, several native children have been missed from the Pettah of this place, and general report says, that a Rajpootnee of distinction, residing a few days' march from hence, and who has for some time past been in a dangerous state of illness, having been informed by her medical advisers that all endeavours to restore her would prove ineffectual, unless she consented to eat the heart and liver of twenty young children, at length acquiesced in the measure. Three days since (says my correspondent, whose letter is dated the 2d

inst.) a child was found in a nullah near this place, with the belly cut open, from which the heart and liver had been extracted. There are now two men confined in the bazaar guard, who have been taken up on suspicion of being connected with this horrible traffic. The inhabitants of Ahmednuggur are in such a state of trepidation, that their children are kept closely confined to their homes."

Thugs.—The following account of the *religious* practices of the Thugs, Phansigars, or Stranglers, a class of highway-robbers in India, who entangle their victims with a noose, and invariably murder them, is given in the *Calcutta Literary Gazette*.

"After they have propitiated the goddess (Bhowanee*), by offering up a share of the booty of the preceding year, and received the priests' suggestions on the subject, they prepare for the following year's expeditions. The different members who are to form the gang assemble at the village of the leader on a certain day, and after determining the scene of operations, they proceed to consecrate their *kodalee*, or small pick-axe, which they use to dig the graves of their victims, and which they consider as their standard. They believe that no spirit can ever rise to trouble their repose from a grave dug by this instrument, provided it be duly consecrated; and they are fearfully

* Her temple is at Bindachul.

scrupulous in the observance of every ceremony enjoined in the consecration, and never allow the earth to be turned with any other instrument. It is a neatly made pick-axe of about four or five pounds weight, six or eight inches long, and with one point. They sacrifice a goat, and offer it up with a coco-nut to Bhowanee. They then make a mixture of sandal and other scented woods, spirits, sugar, flour and butter, and boil it in a cauldron. The kodalee, having been carefully washed, is put upon a spot cleared away for the purpose, and plastered with cow-dung, and the mixture is poured over it, with certain prayers and ceremonies. It is now wiped and folded in a clean white cloth by the presiding priest; and the whole gang proceed some distance from the village upon the road they intend to take, and stand till they hear a partridge call, the priest having in his mind some one of the gang as the bearer of the sacred deposit. If the partridge calls on the right, he places it in the hands of that individual, and in a solemn manner impresses upon him the responsibility of the charge. If the partridge calls on the left, or no one calls at all till the sun is high, they all return and wait till the next morning, when they proceed to another spot, and the priest fixes his mind upon some other individual, and so every morning till the deity has signified his approbation of the choice by the calling of the partridge on the right.

“ If the kodalee should fall to the ground at any

time, the gang consider it as an evil omen, leave that part of the country without delay, and elect another standard-bearer; if no accident happen, the man first elected bears it the whole season, but a new election must take place for the next. The man who bears it carries it in his waist-band, but never sleeps with it on his person, nor lets any man see where he conceals it during the night, or while he takes his rest. All oaths of the members of the gang are administered upon this instrument, folded in a clean white cloth, and placed on ground cleared away, and plastered with cow-dung; and I have heard the oldest of them declare that they believe any man who should make a false oath upon it, would be immediately punished by some fatal disease. If any man among them is suspected of treachery, they make him swear in this manner; and they record strange instances of disease and death that have followed, and may probably have been produced occasionally by the terrors of the moment acting upon a system predisposed to them.

“The standard-bearer, immediately after his election, proceeds across the first running stream, in the direction of the country to which the gang intends to proceed, accompanied by only one witness, to wait for a favourable omen. When they come to the Nurbudda, Jumna, or any other river of this class, the whole gang must accompany him. A deer on the right of the road is a good omen, especially if single.

“If a wolf is seen to cross the road either before or behind them, they must return and take another road. If they hear a jackall call during the day, or a partridge during the night, they leave that part of the country forthwith.

“The investiture of the *Romal* is the next religious ceremony performed. No man can strangle till he has been regularly invested by the priest with the *Romal*, or cloth with which it is performed. Cords and nooses are no longer used; a common handkerchief or waistband is all that men, north of the Nurbudda, will now use; though it is said that in some parts of the Peninsula the cord and noose are still in use, owing to their less liability to be searched, and consequently less necessity for precautions. After a man has passed through the different grades, and shown that he has sufficient of dexterity and of what we may call nerve or resolution, and they call ‘hard-breastedness,’ to strangle a victim himself, the priest, before all the gang assembled on a certain day, before they set out on their annual expeditions, presents him with the *Romal*, tells him how many of his family have signalized themselves by the use of it, how much his friends expect from his courage and conduct, and implores the goddess to vouchsafe her support to his laudable ambition and endeavours to distinguish himself in her service. The investiture with the *Romal* is *knighthood* to these monsters: it is the highest object of their ambition, not

only because the man who strangles has so much a head over and above the share which falls to him in the division of the spoil, but because it implies the recognition, by his comrades, of the qualities of courage, strength and dexterity, which all are anxious to be famed for. The ceremony costs the candidate about forty rupees, and is performed by the Guroo, or high priest of the gang, who is commonly an old Thug, no matter whether Musulman or Hindoo, who has retired from service, and lives upon the contributions of his descendants or disciples, who look up to him with great reverence for advice and instruction, and refer to his decision all cases of doubt and dispute among themselves.

“ Many attain this degree of knighthood before the age of twenty, having been taken out by their masters or parents when young, and early accustomed to assist, by holding the hands of the victims while the knights of the Romal (Bhurtotes) strangle them ; and a man must shew good evidence of the ‘ *kura chatee*,’ or hard breast, before he is admitted even to this office : some men never attain to this honour, particularly those who have adopted the profession late in life, and remain all their lives as decoys, watchmen, grave-diggers and removers of bodies. An attempt has been made, and with some success, to impress Thugs with a belief that the souls of the victims attain paradise, as in the case of other human victims offered up in sacrifice to this

goddess with the prescribed forms, and become the tutelar saints of those who strangle them. This, however, is somewhat at variance with their notion, that the spirits of those who have been buried with the consecrated pick-axe can never rise from their graves; but it reminds one of an opinion that prevails among the people in the wild and mountainous parts of India, that the spirit of a man destroyed by a tiger sometimes rides upon his head and guides him from his pursuers.

“The maxim that ‘dead men tell no tales,’ is repeated, and invariably acted upon, by these people, and they never rob a man till they have murdered him. Under the sanction of religious rites and promises, this pest is spreading throughout our dominions, and becoming in my opinion an evil of greater magnitude than that of the Pindaree system. It is an organized system of religious and civil policy, to receive converts from all religions and sects, and to urge them to the murder of their fellow creatures, under the assurance of high rewards in this world and the next.

“The cow being a form of Doorgha or Bhowanee, the Mahommuduns must forego the use of beef the moment they enlist themselves under her banners; and, though they may read their *Koran*, they are not suffered to invoke the name of Mahommud. The *Koran* is still their civil code, and they are governed by its laws in all matters of inheritance, marriage, &c.”

The Bengal papers of 1832 contain terrific details of the proceedings of the Thugs, and their systematic and organized mode of plunder and murder. The *Meerut Observer* states that the organization of the Thugs is such, that they occupy all the roads and passes, and have their agents, for the receipt of goods and supply of intelligence, in all the chief towns and in most of the cantonments of the Deccan, and that one of the richest bankers of the Deccan is said to be one of their agents. "A Marwari beggar will arrive in the Deccan, with a dirty rag about his loins, and a brass pot over his shoulder, and for some days will subsist on charity, connecting himself with Kunowjee brahmins and Marwar shroffs and bunneahs previously established, and will with their aid set up a shop for the sale of blankets, brass pots, and second-hand cheap goods, and in a surprisingly short time will enlarge his premises, enclose them, and rise to be a rich banker, spreading his agents to the neighbouring towns; he is an agent for the Thugs or P'hansegars." The native governments are accused of dealing too leniently with these wretches, whom they punish only by fine.

In the *Bengal Hurkaru*, of August 3d, 1832, appears a long account of the practices of the Thugs, by a correspondent. It is observed, by the editor of the paper, that "there is a general impression amongst the British inhabitants of India, that the accounts which have been hitherto published of the power and pro-

ceedings of the Thugs have been characterized by considerable exaggeration ; and it is only very lately that the subject has been forced upon the serious notice of the Government.

“ From a perusal of various official documents upon the subject, we have been struck with horror at the almost incredible number of lives that have been sacrificed by these gangs of systematic stranglers. Their forms of worship present a melancholy illustration of the manner in which mankind are apt to warp religion to their own views, and reconcile their consciences to the most hideous crimes. They have their temples and their priests, and never proceed on their expeditions without first imploring the sanction and assistance of their tutelar goddess—Bowanee. Her temple at Bindachul, a few miles west of Mirzapore, is said to be constantly filled with murderers from every quarter of India. That any people, however ignorant and debased, should consider the murder of unsuspecting and unoffending travellers, of both sexes and of all conditions, an act sanctioned by religion, seems, at first thought, a perfect impossibility ; but a very little reflexion and philosophy is sufficient to convince us that no delusion is too gross and palpable for poor human nature. In highly civilized countries, where the march of intellect and freedom is most triumphant, there are prejudices and superstitions which even a Thug would laugh at. These murderers firmly be-

lieve that, if they die in the execution of their professional duties, they will inherit everlasting happiness. It is curious that no shame seems to attach to the most cold-blooded murder, even in the case of infancy, old age, or female loveliness. In the deposition of Syud Ameer Alee, a jemmadar of Thugs, taken before Captain Sleeman, there are several curious confessions of the murder of women and children. The habits of these people are so inveterate, that no change of fortune, good or evil, effects a change in their mode of life."

The following are extracts of the communication referred to:—

"The gang-murderers of central India are a race of human monsters, who make blood their trade. They are brought up to it from their youth by gradual initiation, and if they possess a daring spirit, they never fail to raise themselves to the rank of leader. They leave their homes in groups at the end of the rainy season, and they rendezvous at a spot previously fixed on, where they make their final arrangements for the season. These arrangements consist in fixing on their private signals, the course they are to take, and so on. Before they break into parties or gangs, they muster between three and four hundred strong. Their homes were situated in the Bhopal, Gwalior, and Bundelkund states until lately, and the directions they took were the three great thoroughfares of the Deccan, Scindia's and

Holkar's country, down to the sea, and the Dehli territory. They remain out operating on these roads for eight months every year, when each man generally betakes himself to his own home, and passes the four rainy months ostensibly in farming. Nearly all are married, and their wives conduct their household affairs during their absence, and take charge of the jewels and other property brought or sent home by their men.

“ Careful distinctions are drawn between those fit to throw the handkerchief, and those who are only aspirants; the latter for the first few expeditions are not considered sufficiently hardened to witness the commission of the murders, and are employed, therefore, as grave-diggers and scouts, and they perform all other subordinate duties. The former are called *Bhur-totes*, the latter *Shumseeahs*. When this vicious and extravagant life has given them a *taste* for the employment—for however humbling it is to the pride of man to find any of his fellow-creatures can be found to evince a fondness for such horrible crimes, yet certain it is, these men do acquire such an attachment for this mode of life,—they can rarely afterwards give it up. An instance of this occurred in the leader, Motee, who was executed with twenty-eight others at Saugor, June 30th 1832. This man was returning with a large gang of Thugs from the Deccan, in 1822, towards Bundelkund, and having a brother then in gaol

at Jubbulpore, he called to see him, and informed him of their proceedings. On this information, the brother, Kaleean Sing, went to the political agent, and had them all seized: of two of the party, one was a government chuprassee, and the other a police jemadar. Shewing their official warrants and also a notorious vagabond, whom they had got bound on a litter as a foil, the charge was held to be improbable, and they were let go. After they had left Jubbulpore some days Kaleean Sing again went to the agent, and represented, [that if this gang of a hundred and fifty were again brought back, his brother Motee would point out the places where the bodies of their victims were buried. On this, a strong body of horse and foot were despatched, and the whole party secured near Saugor, with the exception of twelve, who had in the mean time gone off to Bundelkund, with all their valuable plunder. The bodies accordingly were pointed out, and the gang distributed over different gaols of the agency. For this service, Motee was allowed to remain at large on security. This occurred in 1822. After remaining quiet at Jubbulpore for three or four years, he made off, and did not make his appearance again till his security was forfeited. Subsequently, he obtained leave of absence for a few months, and it was while ostensibly on leave, he headed a gang of more than one hundred Thugs, and committed a series of most horrible murders on the Baroda road.

“ As if to mock and ridicule the solemn institutions of man, these wretches affect to have a presiding deity over them ; the goddess Bhowanee they propitiate ere they enter on their villanous enterprizes. So regular and matter-of-course do they regard their occupation, that they look on it in the light of a trade, always calling it by that term. When not on the road, they pay respect and deference to their religious sect, the brahmins ; but on the road, their persons are no longer sacred, and to kill them is no greater sin than any other. Indeed, a large number of Thugs are brahmins.

“ It is an invariable rule with them, never to rob travellers until they have first strangled them ; and it is really wonderful to observe how ridiculously trifling sometimes the temptation is which induces them to commit the crime. Two brahmins were murdered by the Baroda gang at Chaurae, and only two brass pots (lotahs) and a talee were shared between forty. The Bhurtotes, or stranglers, come in for eight annas or a rupee extra, and if the booty is large, each Shumseeah throws in an additional rupee to make up a purse for them. In each gang there are two or three smooth-spoken men, who are usually deputed to join the ill-fated traveller. They generally contrive, in the course of two or three days, to lull the suspicions of the most cautious, and by degrees to introduce the rest of the gang ; at this time, if some fortuitous circumstance

favours their purpose, a grand entertainment is proposed, and the expense readily borne by the Thugs; after dinner, some two or three will play the guitar, the rest of the party sitting round smoking and talking. By this means, having secured their highest confidence, the private signal is given, the fatal cloth is thrown, and the helpless victims are strangled, unpitied and unheard; one man throws the handkerchief, while two hold the hands; and it is not unusual, if a victim is more restive than ordinary, to give him a kick below, which immediately knocks him prostrate, and the work of death is completed. The bodies are now deposited in the graves, prepared to receive them by the young hands, and having collected the booty, they generally decamp. The beds of rivulets are usually selected as the site for the graves. The stream being turned aside, the bodies are buried, when it is again restored to its original course. The reason for doing so is to prevent any putrid smell from emanating, which would attract jackals, wolves, hyænas, and other wild beasts, whose nose would soon lead them to the spot, and the bodies would be torn up and discovered. Whenever, therefore, circumstances transpire to prevent the dead bodies being securely deposited, and they become exposed, the Thugs immediately quit that part of the country. Beds of rivulets are not, however, always selected; sometimes they bury the bodies in mango-groves, or under large tamarind or

bur trees, and the accuracy with which these men will, after a lapse of several years, point out the spot where the murdered bodies are laid, is truly astonishing. When a Thug is admitted as an approver, his narrative of the expedition, containing the names of the gang and where murders were perpetrated, is taken, and he is then sent off, under a guard, to point out the graves. The bones are disinterred, and an inquest held by the party present and the native authorities of the place.

“ Of these numerous gangs of murderers, about 800 have been seized. There were executed at Jubbulpore, in 1830 and 1831, thirty-nine; at Saugor, in June and July 1832, seventy-seven; and the warrants are daily expected up for thirty more! The remainder are either to be transported or imprisoned for life.

“ The indifference these men show on mounting the gallows is truly astonishing. With their own hands they adjust the halter, pressing the knot, some close behind the ear, so that it should not slip, and talking to their companions while doing so with the greatest coolness. Ere the fatal beam can be withdrawn, they jump off, and launch themselves into eternity! The bodies of Musselmans are buried, and the Hindoos burnt. Among the last party of Thugs that were executed, there were seventeen Musselmans, who hung themselves in their shrouds.

“ From the great number of Thugs that have been

seized, it was found necessary to erect two new prison-houses at Saugor, in addition to the gaol. There are now five hundred in confinement, exclusive of those executed, and some fifty or sixty who died in gaol, and others are daily pouring in."

Buddiks.—The *Friend of India* has disclosed the proceedings of a class of depredators called *Buddiks*, who pursue a species of Thuggee on the high road in the interior. Their numbers are said to be very great; they admit men of every class, and have emissaries in every district, in disguise. Some of the gang are to be found in every kind of government employ; they have among them men who are capital writers of Persian, Devanagree, and Hindee,—and, in fact, their system is perfect. They receive the most correct information of the steps to be taken against them, and have a thorough knowledge of the regulations of government, bearing upon them, in any way; and, long before they carry any plan into execution, have properly arranged every necessary precaution to avoid detection. They are by no means blood-thirsty; on the contrary, avoid it as much as possible, but fail not to carry their point at all hazards, where opposed. They do every thing with money, that money can effect, of which they are most liberal, as well to pay for protection and information, as to carry their points in the courts, should they at any time be caught; they

expend large sums among the amlah of all the districts within their reach. Their dealings are marked by the strictest honesty ; and when their funds run short, they readily procure loans from shroffs, to any amount, under the rose. The system of repayment is, that, let them keep the money ever so short a time, even for a single day, the return is two for one ; and, although the lender may, at times, be out of his money for several years, he is sure of getting it back doubled, eventually ;—in this they have never been found to fail. Interior robberies form, also, a part of the Buddick system, and most of the depredations committed on camps are by their hands. Some of their gang are to be found, at all stations, in the private employ of officers, as kidmutgars, syces, &c. Among their gang are men of all capacities, and each has his particular part to play. The party employed for the actual capture of any booty is quite distinct from the rest :—as soon as they have secured it, others are in readiness to receive it ; and the operating party, always a small one, with a *corps de reserve*, disperse.

Modern Hindoo Sects.—The Hindoos of Calcutta are divided into several parties, the orthodox being, as may be supposed, the largest and most opulent. It has several public organs ; the *Chundrika*, the *Prubhakar*, the *Rutnakur*, and other papers, written in the Bengalee language. They have no paper in English,

as yet; but we have heard that a Christian was to have been employed by them to defend the cause of idolatry! The editor of the *Enquirer* threatened to expose him if he attempted to perpetuate the ignorance and superstition of Hindoos, by defending their religion and evil practices. We believe this produced the desired effect, and the Christian has not yet inked his maiden pen to prove that we should have more gods than one.

Rammohun Roy is the founder, or rather the leader, of another sect; but what his opinions are, neither his friends nor foes can determine. It is easier to say what they are *not* than what they are, and this we think is the case with most thinking men. Rammohun, it is well known, appeals to the *Veds*, the *Koran*, and the *Bible*, holding them all probably in equal estimation, extracting the good from each, and rejecting from all whatever he considers apocryphal. He has been known to attend and join in prayer both among Christian and Hindoo Unitarians; but whether he prefers the forms of the one or the other, it is difficult to determine. We have seen persons salute him as a Brahmin, and we have heard him pronounce the brahminical benediction upon such occasions; and if the proceedings of the Brumhu Shubha, as regulated at present, have been sanctioned by him, it is obvious that the Brahmins are treated by his followers with as much respect as they are by the most orthodox. He

has always lived like a Hindoo, drinking a little wine occasionally in the cold weather. He has, we believe, sat at table with Europeans, but never eaten any thing with them. His followers, at least some of them, are not very consistent. Sheltering themselves under the shadow of his name, they indulge to licentiousness in every thing forbidden in the shastras, as meat and drink ; while at the same time they fee the Brahmins, profess to disbelieve Hindooism, and never neglect to have poojahs at home. These persons, the editor of the *Enquirer* calls *half-liberals*, and well he may. The *Reformer* is their paper in the English language, and they have the *Bungoo Doot* and *Conmoodee* in the Bengalee.

The last party which we shall name is the smallest, but, in our opinion, the best and most talented. It is composed of several young gentlemen educated at the Hindoo College, bent upon removing from their countrymen the weight of superstition and ignorance under which they have long groaned, and honest enough to avow their sentiments whenever occasion requires. The editor of the *Enquirer* is of this number, and Baboo Madhub Chunder Mullick is also of the same class. Whatever their opinions may be, we can answer for their candour. They do not mince matters by making a compromise between right and wrong. Show them the error of their ways, and they, being open to conviction, will renounce what is erroneous

and cling to what is true. They are principally to be admired for their fearless honesty. Knowing the risks they run, knowing the persecution to which they will be subject, and knowing the feeling against them, they never scruple to maintain their opinions in the face of friends and foes. They do not hesitate to act as they think, and to acknowledge what they do.—*East-Indian, Oct. 1831.*

Considerable efforts are making by our contemporaries, both of the English and native press, to call the attention of the public to the state of parties amongst the natives in this presidency. A small party has appeared within a very short period, composed of individuals who set at defiance all caste as well as ceremonies, which are enjoined by the Hindu religion. This party, however, is yet small, but it has the ardour, ambition, and enterprize of youth, and the individuals who form it have for the most part acquired a good English education, to animate them in the work of human improvement. This party suffers, as it might have been expected, many inconveniences, in consequence of their adventurous flights above the heads of the bigots. Their minds, we hope, were fully made up to undergo the hardships which have always been connected with exertions to remove useless and incompatible institutions. The stand which they have taken is a high one, and so far as we can

judge, necessarily commands a prospect of extensive usefulness to their fellow-men. It may be thought by some, that this party is engaged in fighting *its own* battles, because it does not avow its faith in the Christian religion. Certain it is, that *faith in Christianity* has had nothing to do in raising up this party, and influencing its conduct. It is with the individuals of it altogether a matter of civil and worldly *policy*, and the object of their "agitation," evidently is to bring their countrymen to a sense of moral obligation and the practice of virtue, from the consideration of their essential advantages to a community of men. By this means they are shielded effectually from the charge of being actuated by a spirit of religious proselytism, and thus the object of their endeavours appears more clearly and distinctly to be, to convert the Hindus to a condition of worldly policy and manners more rational and consistent with social life, than has heretofore been enjoyed, and less obnoxious to the interchange of mutual benevolence and respect, on which much of human happiness depends. They are engaged in a work truly patriotic, and so far as our wishes can contribute to promote their purposes by encouraging them to indefatigable perseverance, they are most freely accorded.

There is another party which seems to be trimming and temporising, and hanging as it were midway between heaven and earth; we wish they had more strength in their wings that they might rise higher above

bigotry and superstition. In their present condition they acquire no great reputation for themselves, either amongst the liberals or bigots, and contribute but little to the real and essential benefit of their country.—*Bengal Chronicle*, Oct. 8th, 1831.

Allusion is made by one of the correspondents of the *Christian Intelligencer* for December, to a new sect, founded by the late Baboo Joynarayun Ghosaul, formerly of Kidderpore, latterly of Benares, where he endowed a college. Their numbers are said to amount to about a hundred thousand. They are called *Kurta Bhoja*, or worshippers of the creator, and deny that Brahmins are gods, reject all idols, perform no *shrad-dha*, or any ceremony connected with idol worship. Their creed is, that there is but one God, and that to think of him constitutes worship; that this was the way the Vedants had pointed out. They are blamed by their neighbours for being slothful and neglecting their families; they never cut their hair, shave their beards, nor pare their nails; and they are abhorred and persecuted by the orthodox Hindus.—*Beng. Herald*, Jan. 3, 1835.

Since our attention has been directed to this subject, we have had several opportunities of obtaining farther information respecting the *Kurta Bhoja* sect, and reviving our recollections of what we had previously heard. We are satisfied that a mistake has been

committed in attributing the institution of this sect to Joynarayun Ghosal, although it is very probable that he may have attached himself to it, and contributed to its extension. We have at Serampore native Christians, of long established character, who were connected with the Kurta Bhojas before they embraced Christianity, nearly thirty years ago; and there are others, younger men, whose parents belonged to the sect. Some of our pundits, being natives of the district where the sect first originated, have likewise given us information respecting it, which coincides with that derived from our christian friends.

The real founder of the sect was Ramchurun Ghose, a Sudgopa (the caste of Cowherds, of whose services bramhuns avail themselves) of Ghospara, on the opposite side of the river, near Hooghly. He appears to have instituted his sect about forty or fifty years ago; and his son to this day enjoys the distinction which at first belonged to his father as head of the Kurta Bhojas. We are inclined to think that, although idleness and licentiousness may be the chief characteristics of this party, at first, at least, there was something better amongst them—a dissatisfaction with the grossness of image-worship, an impatience of bramhuncal pretension to deity, and perhaps some approach to a recognition of the one living and true God, and the spirituality of his worship. It is a certain fact, that a considerable number of those who first received

the Gospel in Jessore, were in a measure prepared to do so by an acquaintance with the religionists of Ghospara. Nevertheless, even then, the excesses which the Kurta Bhojas indulged in appear to have been so abominable as to shock such as were with any sincerity desirous of finding the truth. A chief pretence of the sect has been to substitute an actual vision of the gods of every individual for material images: for each one is allowed to retain the deity he has been accustomed most to honour. We have received different accounts of the means by which this pretence was established. All agree that a secret and darkened apartment is chosen for the purpose. Some imagine that the worshippers have the forms of their gods brought before them in such situations by some inexplicable sort of *black art*, resembling, as we were gravely told, the experiments of chemistry. Others give a much simpler explanation by saying, that the worshippers are made first to look steadfastly upon a strong light, and then turn their faces to a dark recess, where, out of the dazzling confusion left upon their eyes, their imaginations may conjure up something they can call the appearance of their god. It is also one of the tenets of the sect to reject the use of all medicine, instead of which they have recourse in sickness of every sort to some charms of their own. The story goes, that the founder of the sect made friendship with a muha-pooroosh, who gave him a *kulsee* of water, of which

whoever partook would be cured of whatever disease he might be affected with. The water, however, is now spent; and we have not heard what substitute has been obtained for it.

In Jessore, in particular, the sect is very widely diffused. Many of its adherents conceal their connection with it; but even those who make no secret of it do not lose caste, because no openly manifest distinction or observance is required of them which is in violation of the rules of caste; and their promiscuous feasting of all castes, Hindoos, Moosulmans, and even Portuguese, is always so secret as to be unseen by those who are in caste: and what is unseen is in respect of caste harmless. The sect have not yet produced any written account of their doctrines; indeed, they hold pens, ink and paper in contempt: they are too material for them. Their doctrine is, therefore, wholly traditional, and is propagated by initiated disciples, in correspondence with the chief at Ghospara.—*Friend of India*, Jan. 14, 1835.

Superstitions.—A Correspondent in the *Calcutta Government Gazette*, of November 25, 1830, states the following particulars respecting a kind of sorcerers in the Deccan, called *Jadoo Walahs*.

“I lately brought to trial,” he says, “several of these dangerous characters; they were convicted of extorting money, under false pretences, from their more simple-

minded brother soldiers. Amongst other articles used in their trade, were human navels, and skulls; brains; hollow rings for the ancles and for the wrists, within which deleterious ointments might be placed; and an assortment of drugs, of a very doubtful nature, with spirits in flasks and bottles. The prejudice against the punishment of imputed Dæmonology should not be permitted to prevent the due execution of the law against wretches who extort money, under false pretences, from the more simple lieges; and I had the satisfaction of having a nest of these male sorcerers rooted out.

“Connected with this subject is the following fact;—a stout native soldier brought to me an iron implement, shaped at one end like a spade, and at the other end like a spoon—he complained that this instrument had been thrown into his hut, by a Jadoo Walah, and that it signified that he was to dig his grave with the spade, and take poison out of a spoon; or that similar results would be inevitable. The man was in evident trouble; argument or reasoning would have been useless; he begged my interference, and expressed his decided belief that I could avert the evil. I desired him to stand on his left leg and throw the instrument over his right shoulder, when it might revert to the proper owner. He did so, and I believe he is to this day grateful to me, being impressed with an idea that I had averted from him a dire calamity.

“It is most certain, that the Jadoo Walahs, or

persons who extort money from simple people, under false pretences, are numerous in the Deccan, and also that they do a great deal of mischief. There are other persons who practise *keymia* or chemistry, who deprive simple people of their wealth; but this species of felony is, in my opinion, far less dangerous than that practised by the Jadoo Walahs."

A respectable native, at Kamptee, transmitted to a British correspondent at Madras, in November 1830, the following translation of a Mahratta paper, which had been sent to certain merchants at Benares:

Translation of a Mahratta Paper, purporting that a

Letter was sent from Heaven to Visvonadaswamy's Church at Benares, and copied by a Brahmin named Kusseyapoo, as follows:—

"In the Hindoostanee year 1888, and Saleevahun Sagabdum 1753, answering to the year A.D. 1832, in the month of February, on the fifth day after the full moon, which will be on Saturday, and at the hour of ten o'clock A.M., when the sun enters Capricorn, the present iron age of the world will be turned into a golden age, which will continue for 1,000 years, when the general duration of human life will be 125 years; and at the above-mentioned date, a rajah will be born at the North Pole, about eight o'clock in the morning, of the race of the moon, and that night will be lengthened to $13\frac{1}{4}$ hours, after the expiration of nine hours of which, an earthquake will take place, when

all tyrants and wicked people will be destroyed ; but holy and charitable persons will be preserved. Those who receive this account with doubt will undoubtedly commit sin ; but those who receive it and transmit it to other countries, will perform as much charity as if they had presented a thousand cows and horses.”

It is a remarkable proof of the facility, rapidity, and success with which these dangerous productions are circulated to the remotest parts of the East, that a missionary in Ceylon (the Rev. James Selkirk), about this time, transmitted a copy of this very prophecy to the Church Missionary Society at home, stating that it had produced great excitement amongst the natives of that island.

In the Mahratta war of 1818, after the flight of the Peshwa, a prophetic proclamation was extensively circulated throughout Central India. The document was placed in a basket with a coco-nut, the line of route being pointed out by which it was to pass, and it was transmitted by each village to the next with prodigious rapidity. It purported to announce the re-establishment of the Peshwa, the overthrow of the British, and a great earthquake. It closed thus : “ The Europeans will go to hell, and the Bramins will succeed to their power.”

“ Last year, all the farmers of the Saugor district petitioned against the slaughter of bullocks, and stated that the gentlemen entrusted with the civil administra-

tion, had done every thing in their power to repair their losses and alleviate their sufferings, and that the liberality of government, in remissions, had been such as they had never experienced under any other ; but that they were now of opinion that this would be all unavailing, as long as our troops consumed *beef* ; that the Nerbudda was a stream still more sacred than the Ganges, inasmuch as it was necessary that a man should taste of the Ganges before he could derive any advantage from its waters ; but that the sight of the Nerbudda was sufficient to purify him. The crime, therefore, of killing bullocks, in the vicinity of that river, could not fail to call down the vengeance of the deity, which involved the innocent with the guilty. Crimes, they said, in such a place, were always visited more immediately and more severely than elsewhere ; and they had at first attributed these unheard-of calamities to our laxity in the punishment of adultery, which had, in consequence, become more common. Women had eloped from their husbands, and the widows of Brahmans, Rajpoots, and shopkeepers, had re-married with impunity. But finding that our increased vigilance and severity on this head had brought no relief, they were now satisfied that the crime of *eating beef* was alone the cause, and that, till we prohibited the slaughter of bullocks, there could be no security for our harvests, and continual defalcations in the revenue must take place, and misery among all classes of society be ex-

pected. These petitions were signed and given 'in by thousands, and the matter discussed with the best possible feeling on both sides ; and it ended in the prohibition of the slaughter of bullocks in the town of Saugor and the groves of villages. Trees were pointed out which had withered in consequence of having had joints of *beef* hung on them when our troops were cantoned in the neighbourhood. They had certainly decayed, but more from the frost than from the beef, for the troops passed the villages during the cold season, when the frost was severe. The coincidence was, however, very remarkable."—*Corresp. Cal. Cour., February, 1832.*

The following case occurred in the Court of Nizamut Adawlut, Calcutta, June 29, 1832. *Government, v. Mussumat Ambeeka Deba and Nizam Shaw Fakeer.*—The prisoners were tried at the first session for the zilla Silhet for 1832 ; charge, murder of Mohesh Surma, the son of Mussumat Ambeeka Deba : Mr. Goldsworthy commissioner.

The female prisoner, Mussumat Ambeeka, is the widow of a brahmin, and resided in the same house with her son, the deceased (a young man twenty-five years of age) and a daughter (about seven years) ; the other prisoner, Nizam Shaw, who is a Moosulman fakeer, and was formerly in the habit of wandering about the villages, took up his residence in the house of Mussumat Ambeeka some time before the murder

was committed, and a criminal intercourse commenced between them, which the widow persisted in, notwithstanding the endeavours of her son to dissuade her from such a disgraceful course, and his having on one occasion turned the fakeer out of the house. Several quarrels took place, in consequence, between the deceased and his mother's paramour, and a strong enmity subsisted between them. In the month of December last, some of the neighbours, on passing near Ambeeka's house, saw the dogs eating what appeared to be part of a human body, and on asking where Mohesh Surma (who they had not seen for two days) was, his mother and the fakeer gave such contradictory answers, that their suspicions were excited, and information was sent to the thannah. The police officers found some parts of a human body near the house, and in the bed of a *khal* (or rivulet) behind the house, the earth of which was stained with blood, a mat was discovered also bearing bloody stains. On their proceeding to search the interior of the house, the female prisoner produced a *koolharee* or hatchet, a *doss* or sickle, and a *bookey* or small sickle, and confessed, that she had murdered her son during his sleep, by a blow over the left eye, with the *koolharee*, at the instigation of the prisoner, Nizam Shaw, by whose direction she afterwards cut up and dissevered the body, *part of which she cooked and gave him (Nizam Shaw) to eat*, and the remainder was buried in a hole, dug by the fakeer, under some trees near the house,

from whence the piece found by the neighbours had been taken by the dogs ; that she had made use of the *doss* and *bookee* for the purpose of cutting up the body ; that a criminal intercourse subsisted between her and Nizam Shaw, who had for some time before the murder been incessantly importuning her to murder her son, and had given her the *koolharee* for that purpose. On a second examination, she stated to the police-officers, that Nizam Shaw was the murderer, and that she was accessory to it ; that she had declared herself to be the murderer in her first examination, with the view of exculpating her paramour. The police officers then caused the earth to be dug up where the prisoner pointed out, and found the mutilated fragments of a human body, the limbs and head of which had been cut off, and the head having a deep wound over the left eye ; the neighbours, on seeing the head, recognized the features of Mohesh Surma. Before the magistrate, Mussumat Ambeeka repeated her secondary assertions, *viz.* that Nizam Shaw was the murderer, and that she was an accomplice, and said that Nizam Shaw persuaded her that he was her former husband, who had been restored to life, and that if she killed her son Mohesh Surma, it would be the means of restoring to life four children whom she had lost.

Mussumat Doorun, daughter of the female prisoner (aged seven years), whom the magistrate examined without oath, but whose depositions were not taken before this court in consequence of her minority,

stated, that she had seen her mother strike the deceased three blows with a *koolharee* and that Nizam Shaw was holding him. At the thannah she denied having seen the murder committed, which was probably through fear of the prisoners.

Before the circuit court, Ambeeka admitted having made the Mofussil and Foujdaree confessions, and stated that she committed the murder herself, at the instigation of Nizam Shaw.

The prisoner Nizam Shaw denied the murder *in toto* before the police officers, but he admitted that the *koolharee* was his, and that on the night of the murder, he was in the house of a person named Hussun Reza ; that he went next day with the *koolharee* to Ambeeka's house, where he saw Mohesh Surma lying dead, on which he ran off through fear, leaving the *koolharee* behind him. The *alibi*, however, could not be proved, and it was established in evidence, that he lived day and night in Ambeeka's house, up to the day on which the murder was discovered.

The *futwah* of the law officers convicts Mussumat Ambeeka, on her own confessions, and declares her liable to "*Dient*:" "*Kissas*" being barred, in consequence of her relationship to the deceased. A second *futwah* declares, that, if the relationship did not exist, she would be liable to suffer death by "*Kissas*." Nizam Shaw is convicted by the *futwah*, on violent presumption, and declared liable to punishment by "*Akoobut*."

The commissioner further added, that he concurred

entirely in the conviction of both prisoners, and from all the circumstances of the case, and in the absence of any other motive which could have induced the mother to murder her son, he was of opinion that the presumption is sufficiently strong to convict Nizam Shaw of instigation, aiding and abetting in the crime, and that both prisoners are deserving of capital punishment.

The sentence of this court, however, was, that both prisoners should be imprisoned for life.

Suicides.—A Hindu correspondent of the *Madras Courier*, with reference to the frequency of suicides by natives, makes the following remarks :

“ In Madras, there are, I doubt not, lacs of souls, say half Christians and half heathens, and, ever since the Coroner’s Department was established, which perhaps now is more than forty years, was it ever heard that a Christian, East-Indian or Native, ever took away his own life wilfully ;* that life which God gave, and which he alone has a right to take away ? whereas, on the contrary, the Hindoos (heathens), for every trivial thing, make away with their lives, either by drowning in a tank or well, by hanging, or cutting their throats, or by poisoning themselves, &c. I would wish any of my Hindoo brethren to tell me how comes this difference, that Hindoos are for every trivial thing ready to perpetrate self-murder, and that Christians,

* Surely the writer was not ignorant of a remarkable instance of suicide by an European holding a judicial appointment.

Native or East-Indians, for worse offences, shrink from such a crime? I would, therefore, very respectfully, and with great submission, recommend to the legislative council and to our present much esteemed governor-general, Sir C. Metcalfe, to enact a law, to the effect following: "That, from and after this date, all persons committing suicide, either by hanging, drowning, or otherwise, and if it be proved on evidence that the crime was wilful—that the bodies of such person be not given over to the family or relations of the deceased, but that the coroner or magistrates shall, in all such cases, at the expense of Government, send such carcases to the nearest jungle, there to be thrown for a prey to the wild beasts of the forest, and that the property of such deceased persons, either of land or otherwise, shall be confiscated for the use of the crown."

Cases of self-murder effected and attempted in the city of Delhi between the 1st January 1833 and 1834.—
Computed population, 200,000.

	By Opium.	Arsenic.	Bhang, Gunja, Churrus.	Leaping into Wells.	Leaping from House-tops.
Died	44	11	0	9	1
Recovered	6	5	9	5	14
Total	50	16	9	14	15

Grand Total, one hundred and four.

Delhi Gazette, Jan. 7, 1834.

Defence of Polygamy.—The discussions in the Calcutta papers, in 1836, on the subject of Polygamy, brought forth the following plausible defence of it, by a native:—

“ Sir,—You English gentlemen are very fond of complaining against the natives of this country, because they marry many wives. If your religion and the customs of your country don't allow you to have more than one woman as wife, why should we be guided by you, who are of another nation and religion? It is a true thing, which every body acquainted with Asia knows, but how it happens nobody knows, that there are more women than men in this country; whether because more females are born, or because you Englishmen kill the males in battle, magician only can tell. Then, in this case, giving one woman to every man, what is to become of the remaining many women? They must have somebody to love them. The plain truth is, we are destined by nature to have many wives and much happiness—it is our good fate to have many wives—it has been so from the beginning of the world. Don't then, I pray, interfere with the decree of nature.”

Self-Accusation.—A jemadar, newly promoted, was murdered in the sepoy lines on the 25th of February, 1836. He was waylaid and cut down close to his own quarters, and the murderers, two in number, effected

their escape, after the perpetration of the deed, leaving their victim dead upon the spot. A tulwar-sheath was found resting against the wall of the jemadar's house, behind which the murderers had evidently taken their station to watch his egress. Many sepoys were placed in custody, and very little doubt is entertained of all the parties implicated in the foul crime being detected. A few days after the murder was committed, a fakeer made an ineffectual attempt to get the men, who are confined on suspicion, released, by inducing a sepoy to declare that he committed the crime, and that no one else was implicated; the fakeer also offered to point out the spot, where the instrument of murder was hid; but, notwithstanding his assurance, no tulwar was forthcoming. On inquiry, it was found that the sepoy was entirely guiltless, although he insisted upon pleading guilty. It appears that he had been cajoled by the fakeer into a belief that he would go direct to Heaven, if he sacrificed himself to save those who were in confinement, one of whom is the subadar-major of the corps: the man's innocence, however, has been put beyond a doubt by five men swearing an *alibi*.

TALES AND FICTIONS.



TALES AND FICTIONS.



THE SCRIBBLETON PAPERS.

I.

*From Miss Louisa Scribbleton to Miss Eustathia
Bowdler of Edmonton.*

“ Madras, 18th January, 18—.

“ IMAGINE, if you can, dearest Eustathia, the contrast that saddens my heart, when, for the first time, I find myself conversing with you at the distance of I know not how many thousand miles; wafting the inward sentiments of my soul to you, who were always the depository of all that gladdened or clouded it, almost literally “from Indus to the pole.” What a contrast ! I say ; for, only a few months ago, our correspondence, sometimes twice, never seldomer than once, a day, was conveyed backwards and forwards by the little Mercury you facetiously called “ bow-legged Jack,” whose pocket, for the perquisite of a penny per journey, was freighted with our mutual secrets, of joy how rarely, but how often of our crosses and

perturbations! Then they had only to traverse the church-yard of Edmonton,—nearly the whole space that divided our habitations:—they have now to cross an illimitable ocean. As our beloved Shakspeare says, ‘we must shake hands as over a vast, and embrace as it were from the ends of opposed winds.’

“Yet, at this distance, I feel each day the *besoin d’épître* we both felt so intensely at Edmonton, or if any thing unusual had occurred to agitate your friend, when the supernumerary piece of copper gave wings to the leaden pace of our bow-legged messenger, or bribed him from joining the game of marbles in the church-yard, which so often frustrated our most earnest injunctions of expedition. And, in fancy, I seem as near to you as ever; and, in that pleasing illusion, I shall continue to write, as if my letters were still consigned to our bow-legged loiterer, instead of being committed to the chances of the deep in the *James Innis* or the *William Fairlie*, or some name equally mercantile and uncouth. If the gods, for our especial accommodation, would but have the goodness to annihilate time and space, our letters would fly once more like shuttlecocks from one to the other. I speak, at least, for myself, for I have volumes to pour out to you. Oh, that I could tell you all, sitting by

your side in the snug boudoir that overlooks your garden ! It would last you till you had completed the sprigged stomacher *à la Martigny* you were so intensely employed on a few days before we parted. Then, indeed, we had but few incidents to communicate, and, in the dearth of these, were wont to eke out our talk with those reciprocal confidences of the state of our hearts, and the notes which our eyes, in their dexterous short-hand, had inscribed on them of the attractions of certain beaux, who, on the same night, at the same ball, and during the same quadrille—but this is forbidden ground, and I forbear. What I mean is, I have now so much to do with facts, that I have not a sentiment, as Rosalind says, to throw at a dog, and you must not be displeased if my letters resemble those of your aunt Fonnereau, when she gets upon the subject of her poultry and her pigs; mere gazettes and chronicles of petty incidents. Yet my Eustathia will not value them so cheaply, since, trifling as they may seem, they relate to the weal or woe of her Louisa.

“ Where shall I begin ? Not indeed *à la création*, like the French avocat;—but the voyage: and what an era, in the life of a girl of eighteen, is an Indian voyage ! An Indiaman, dear Eustathia, is at first an interesting object of contemplation.

Never shall I forget the mysterious, all-absorbing impression made upon my mind, when I first beheld this stupendous structure. I sat entranced for awhile in the boat to gaze on her with dumb amazement, until awakened from my stupor by the chair that was lowered for my ascent. Arrived on the deck, I literally shrunk back, overpowered with awe at the novelty of the scene which presented itself, where nautical neatness,—inferior indeed, as Harry Cleveland used to tell me, to that displayed on board a King's ship,—accurate arrangement, intricate machinery, and masses of men moving like machines at the call of their officers, overwhelmed me with the gigantic grandeur of the whole. As I stepped along, I could not help admiring the whiteness of the planks and the shining ebony of the sides, whilst I started at the sounds of the shivering sails, which came over me, ever and anon, like thunder-claps, as they flapped their mighty wings in the wind. All this, you may easily suppose, filled me with that romance you were wont to attribute to your friend; in other words, fell in with that love of the sublime and the vast, which has been ever your friend's habitual feeling, or rather you will say her besetting whim, through the whole of her little life.

“ But the romance of an Indiaman, my dear

girl, soon vanishes. An Indiaman is a great phial, in which all the plagues of humanity are bottled up and shaken into perpetual effervescence. Oh, the sea-monsters of the deck, and the rabble of cadets and soldier-officers (for so the King's officers are called), bawling and quarrelling and laying bets within a few inches of the cot on which you are gasping for life in a fit of the sea-sickness! And that sickness! may you never know it, so as to form the faintest conception of its horrors! We used to read at school of the tortures of the unblest in Tartarus; but how tame an imagination is the stone of Sisyphus, or the wheel of Ixion, to the sea-sickness! To wish for death, when the horrid noises of the ship will not let you die in quiet—but I forbear the description. Though I have been landed a month, its giddiness and unutterable languor seem to recur when I think of it. And when you have recovered this, my dear, there is the overdone politeness of the captain and his mates, softening their voices, half-cracked by conversing with the elements, into the piano of hyenas; and the minced steps with which they sidle-up to you on the quarter-deck (for the animals pride themselves on their attentions to our sex), like bears “dancing to the minuet in *Ariadne*.” Poor mamma, indeed, was delighted with their assiduities. Good crea-

ture, she did not suspect them to be laughing at her, which I fear was too often the case, those little slips of grammar and pronunciation, the defects of a neglected education, being in their eyes legitimate subjects of ridicule. But what amused them the most, and I confess it was ridiculous enough, was her perpetual fidgettiness lest I should lose my heart to one of them—that heart which my father had destined to be the prize of some rich civilian. And the soldier-officers,—one or two of whom were indeed tolerable,—dear creature, she trembled when one of them approached me, for she had taught herself to believe that an officer in his regimentals is irresistible amongst women, and may summon the garrison to a surrender at the first sound of the trumpet. Alas! she might have spared herself so much needless perturbation, had she known more of your Louisa's heart, and the sovereignty to which its allegiance has long since been transferred.

“What a chronicle could I compile of the discords and factions that were for ever breaking out in this floating box of Pandora! And, oh, what an arena of petty rivalships and passions, not the less bitter for being politely smothered in the quarter-deck of an Indiaman! And this always in proportion to the number of female passengers, who, if angels at all, are never angels of concord,

and bring on their wings anything but peace and healing. For my part, I amused myself as a sly observer of their settings of caps against each other, wondering how so many restless demons of pride, envy, and uncharitableness, could find their way into bosoms so young and unpolluted. The genius of these little storms was Miss Cornelia F., who seemed to enjoy the whirlwinds she had no small share in exciting. She had, it seems, been a teacher at one of the fashionable boarding-schools, where young misses are crammed with everything before they can digest anything, and though advanced considerably beyond the usual age at which ladies are sent out to India, Miss Cornelia, having scraped together sufficient for the voyage, boldly ventured to this grand mart of beauty and accomplishments, quite satisfied with the remnant that still remains to her of the one, but overweeningly confident in her intellectual supremacy. How it would amuse you, dear Eustathia, to mark the tenacity with which she clings to a few outward and visible signs of youthful beauty still lingering on her face, as persons who have stumbled over a cliff, catch hold of every crumbling projection of the soil, though giving way the moment they grasp it! Quite satisfied, though she would have every body believe that she despises exterior attractions,

with her ragged inventory of faded charms, I am sure, that, during the voyage, her fancy feasted upon anticipated conquests in India. But, would you think it, Miss F. is a great political economist! and she shewed me a trunk full of tracts upon her favourite science, all of her own composition.

“Do you remember, when we were at school, that our governess used to torment us with questions from Mrs. Marcet’s dialogues on political economy, and how glibly we answered them, without knowing a word about the matter? Miss F. repeatedly asked me whether I had ever turned my attention to the subject, and when I mentioned the elementary book, that used to worry our poor brains about rent, wages, labour, wealth, and the Lord knows what besides, she turned up her nose at my superficial smatterings, and spoke contemptuously of crawling through the little wicket-gates of knowledge, instead of marching boldly into its stately portals, with much gibberish to the same purpose. Oh, my dear, you cannot imagine, when she was tired of setting every body by the ears, how fond she was of mounting this *cheval de bataille* of hers, as the French call it. Unfortunately, she found in poor mamma and me not indeed willing but unresisting listeners; for a bore is a thing that must be listened to, just as a ghost

is a thing which, however frightful, you must needs stare at, whether you will or no. Mamma, indeed, was at first particularly attentive to her lectures; and taking it for granted that *economy* meant 'good husbandry,' thought it kind of her to impress upon the mind of one so much younger than herself the duty of laying out her money to the best advantage. What a pity it is, my dear, she said to me, we had not the pleasure of Miss F.'s acquaintance when we laid in our outfit! What bargains we should have made in Cranbourne-alley!

"Never was there a creature so controversial as Miss Cornelia. It was quite ridiculous to hear her debate with the captain at the cuddy-table, a man of plain sense, but not at all inclined to admit anything he did not comprehend. Buying and selling, consumption and demand, being mercantile subjects, which having understood all his lifetime in his own way, his politeness was most inhumanly taxed by our female economist, who was never so happy as when she unsettled, or, to use her own phrase, 'put to flight,' old-fashioned modes of thinking. Sometimes, indeed, he was near forgetting the sex of the disputant, for a volley of half-suppressed oaths might be heard distinctly enough by every body at the table, though the lady herself was too

keenly intent on victory to notice them. Little as I was interested in the discussion, I understood enough of it, however, to think that the captain had the best of it. ‘And this nonsense, ma’am,’ said he, ‘is what you call the doctrine of the new school? A fig for the new school!’—‘Speak reverently of the new school, Captain Orlop,’ exclaimed Miss Cornelia, ‘with the immortal name of Brougham at the head of it.’ ‘D—n the immortal name of Brougham,’ muttered Captain Orlop; ‘if your doctrine was sea-worthy, it would need no caulking and cobbling up with names. Try it by the standard of good sense, and then see whether it will bear the overhauling. Hear me for one minute, ma’am.’ ‘As long as you please, Captain Orlop.’ ‘I understand, ma’am, your doctrine to be this: that to cheapen agricultural and other produce by reducing profits to nothing, and making wages only the lowest pittance to support life; to throw capital and labour out of employ, and thus diminishing the means of consumption to nine-tenths of the population, is the surest and most beneficial way to produce consumption?’

“ ‘Certainly,’ exclaimed the political economist.

“ ‘So that the less,’ continued Captain Orlop, ‘we produce, and the less we get for every thing we have to sell, the more we shall be enabled to

buy of other nations ; in other words, the less we have to go to market with, the better we shall be able to purchase at it ?

“Unprepared for so peremptory a specimen of Socratic reasoning, or indignant that her doctrines should be so irreverently handled, the lady assumed such a Gorgon-like look of contempt, that the poor skipper was half-petrified, and glad to put an end to the controversy by drinking the King’s health, the signal at which the ladies always retire from the table. But it was more comic still to see her actually in close fight with one of the soldier-officers, a hot-brained Hibernian, who sometimes exercised the privilege of talking about subjects he did not understand. It seems that Miss Cornelia had been enumerating the different classes of consumers, as they are classed by political economists. ‘By my sowl, ma’am,’ said Captain Doherty, ‘I don’t exactly know what you mane by calling officers in his Majesty’s service unproductive consumers.’ ‘They are placed in that class,’ said the lady, ‘by Adam Smith, who says that you were born to consume the fruits of the earth.’ ‘By the powers!’ returned the Hibernian, ‘and I should like to hear this Mr. Smith tell me so to my face. Born to consume the fruits of the earth ! and what would become of the fruits of the earth,

my dare crature, if we did not consume them, that is, while we have money in our pockets to pay for them? Faith, ma'am, were you not after telling us just now, that the greater the consumption, the greater was the production? According to your own theory, then, ma'am, we are not unproductive consumers, for the more we consume the more we produce, begging your pardon, ma'am, for refuting you.' Here he looked round the table with conscious triumph, and his victory gave every body else nearly as much satisfaction as he felt himself, for it silenced the female combatant, who, with an acetous smile of disdain, shunned all further controversy with so puny an adversary; like an eagle disdaining an ignoble quarry, she mounted aloft into the regions of her own speculations.

"But a truce to the incidents of the voyage; nor should I have introduced Miss Cornelia F. and her scientific pedantry to your notice, had not chance afterwards linked her with one or two incidents that affected the peace of your poor Louisa.

"Here, however, we are,—in a new world, in the midst of strange faces, black and white—the former the most agreeable of the two; for what I have yet seen of the natives disposes me to prefer them most immeasurably beyond the Europeans,

whether ladies or gentlemen, of the settlement. What a bevy of misses—pale, hoping, despairing, like so many ghosts wandering on the shores of the Styx, over which they have been irrevocably ferried! To use the hackneyed simile of the market—what goods and what buyers! We settled ourselves instantly on our landing, papa having provided a commodious garden-house for our reception, near the Mount-road, the grand promenade, where all the pride and fashion of Madras is exhibited every evening. Would that he had never sent for me after so long an estrangement! Eustathia, often have I told you how my heart throbbed to meet the embraces of a long-absent father. What an indefinable tumult of sensations assailed me, as I flung myself into the arms of a well-looking middle-aged person, standing on the beach to greet our arrival, and whom, in the flutter of my spirits and the fever of my filial emotions, I had mistaken for my father! What an awkward delusion—to be coolly jogged on the elbow with the remark—‘Miss Scribbleton, this is your father,’—pointing to a thick-set cadaverous-looking gentleman, somewhat beyond the middle age, with a grave countenance, in every furrow of which all the cares of official life seemed legibly characterized! He received my advances

with so cold and deadening a formality, that I was shocked, or rather stunned, Eustathia. But I was wrong ; for, though his feelings are not strung to a high tone, and the coldness of his manner at first repulsively awed me, he is in every sense of the word a good man, though formal and precise in appearance.

“ Yet I must repeat my regrets, that he should have deemed it expedient to send for mamma and me, after so long an estrangement from us. For, having established us in the house he purchased for us at Edmonton, he returned to India, as I have often told you, when I was only three years of age. And to transplant my mother from the soil in which all her habits and thoughts had taken root,—her little coteries of tea and whist, and a little of that innocent scandal, without which the most superlative hyson is insipid ! What a revolution in her whole state of being ! And here, Eustathia, I cannot but regret, sacred as the imperfections of a parent ought to be from the scrutiny of a child, how much the absence of education, owing to the humble condition in which my father wedded her, and the slip-slop habits of conversation which the Edmonton coteries tended perhaps to confirm (for Mrs. Martinmas, and Mrs. Tuck, and certain other chief performers at those precious gossippings, were

not of the new school, if they could be said to be of any school at all), have unfitted her, dear soul, for the society of an Indian settlement. Amply, however, supplied with the means of bestowing on me the best of educations, in that respect, she did her duty to the letter, and I trust that, on this score, I shall answer the expectations my father has accustomed himself to form of me.

“Of course, his chief inducement was to establish me in life. You know what the phrase implies, and mamma gave me a hint this very morning, that he had actually in his eye, for that purpose, a civil servant of high rank in the service, and his own bosom friend. Eustathia, can this be so? Am I to have no choice in the matter? It cannot be. The times of the Grandisons and Clarissa Harlowes are gone by, when hearts were signed and sealed away by the same sheet of parchment which transferred their land or their three-per cents., and parents are grown too rational to barter the affections of their children. But I am to be introduced to him, I understand, at a dinner to be given us this day by Sir Jasper Nettlesome, one of the judges of the Supreme Court, in honour of our arrival, and I am to be the *prima donna* of the performance. * * *

“I resume my pen, dear Eustathia. It was

a formal *chez-vous* as they call it, in the phrase of the settlement, and the moment I entered the room, I began speculating on the sort of personage to whom the destinies of your poor Louisa were to be confided. I had been, indeed, prepared for it, in one respect, by my father, who had thrown out at the breakfast-table a wish that I might *approve* of some eligible civil servant as the friend and protector of my future life. But not a word about my heart, nor a single question whether it was disposed of already, as if there had been no such organ in the human anatomy. I was of course all expectation and anxiety; for my only chance of extricating myself from an engagement, which, alas! I have it no longer in my power to make, would depend on the sort of person who should make his advances to me. It was not long before my perplexity as to the person was at an end; for just before dinner is announced, it is usual for the host to nominate the lady which each gentleman is to hand to table. What was my surprise, on seeing the same individual into whose arms I had heedlessly rushed on my first landing, under the conviction that it was my father, advance slowly towards me, to claim the honour of escorting me to dinner, my father at the same time gravely introducing him as his particular friend, Mr. Jeremiah

Lawson, chief judge of the Sudder-ul-Dawlut court, first member of the Board of Trade, and, I believe, second or third member of some board of which I forget the name: for they have here a pompous diplomatic way of announcing every body by their official dignities! It was a mouthful of honours, dear Louisa, sufficient to choke me. However, you may imagine I did not feel myself on a bed of roses, in having the chief part in that most ridiculous of farces—an Anglo-Indian courtship—thrust upon me; yet I played the *amiable* as well as I could, resolved internally to shew no signs of acquiescence in the kind parental project to make me happy in spite of myself. But whether it was from the habit of conversing only with the dull official characters of his own sex, that he was deficient in the elastic play of discourse requisite for ours, or whether it was from some obtuseness of his nature, so it was, he hung so heavily in hand (to borrow an emphatic phrase from the stable), that I felt already the full weight of the penance I had to endure.

“Dinner being announced, the whole party began to descend a narrow staircase,—for Sir Jasper’s, unlike most of the houses here, consisted of two stories,—my civilian keeping fast hold of me. Scarcely had we reached the brink of the stairs,

when an apparition rushed past me ! Cudgel not your brains with conjecture, my dear girl : it had the shape and bearing of a fine gallant youth, in the full dress of a naval lieutenant. You have now guessed who it was : it struggled forward to make the bow to Sir Jasper, who was in our rear. Oh, what a tremor came over me ! Luckily, my official beau was too much occupied in studying formal sentences for conversation, to notice my disorder. Was it a forgery of the fancy—a trick of necromancy—or was it Henry Cleveland that moved in embodied substance before my eyes ? It was. The *Euryalus* frigate, my dear, had that very morning anchored in the roads. Sir Jasper had invited the captain and first lieutenant to his party, and it was Henry Cleveland, in the character of that first lieutenant, who had pressed forward towards our host as the bearer of his captain's apologies. Judge of my surprise. I had never heard of Cleveland's appointment to the ship, and when we last met neither of us dreamed of meeting in India.

“As we seated ourselves at table, I met and answered Cleveland's look of recognition. Could I beckon to him,—for he was standing amongst a bevy of Madras figurantes in white muslin,—by what telegraphic hint could I tell him to place

himself on the vacant side of me? At that instant, a prim sallow civilian darted forward to seize me by the hand which was at liberty, but by a dexterous *ruse*, Henry was beforehand with him, not, however, without treading on some sensitive part of the little personage's foot, who limped off as your little Damon would have done, if a lighted cinder had chanced to scorch him. What a look the creature darted from his little shining face,—not indeed the shining morning face of Shakspeare, but of so unctuous a brightness, that had you been by the side of him, you might have adjusted a stray lock or pinned up a rebellious curl by its reflection!—and he was the more mortified, since the mischance threw him by the side of Miss F., who has already acquired the reputation of being an unrivalled bore. It was a mischievous amusement, indeed; but as they sate opposite, I could not help smiling when I saw him writhe beneath her eternal clatter, about rent and wages and labour.

“I had volumes to pour out to Henry Cleveland,—the overflowings of my heart's tablets for more than the period of a year's separation. But strict parental authority had so duly committed me to the legal custody of my Sudder-ul-Dowlut admirer, that I could scarcely listen to the more pleasing though contraband assiduities of Henry. And your

civilian, my dear, is always unmercifully long in his sentences, and speaks in the same precise style in which he writes his despatches to the India House ; and each of his remarks was preceded by a *hem*, that reminded me of the premonitory click you have heard from an old-fashioned clock just before it strikes. It was seldom, therefore (for the stern eye of my father was upon me), that I could escape from his elaborate truisms to a broken disjointed chat with Cleveland. And oh, what a contrast between their voices ! Imagine, my love, the drawl of an itinerant hautboy at one of your ears, and the soft breathings of Sola's silver flute at the other ! And then the civil servant's long pompous remarks—and the light-winged converse of Henry. You have read about Venice : figure to yourself a black heavy gondola, slowly moving along one of its canals and raking up the mud of its shallows—then contrast it with some trim airy skiff, gliding like a vision of the element on the curling undulations of a summer-sea. Yet, shall I confess to you, he never once alluded to the letter which I found on my writing-table ; that letter, the only key by which I could interpret his warm and tender assiduities. How strange, that he should not contrive to ask for an answer to the question it contained—since all his happiness in life depended on it ! I use the very

phrase ; and he well knew that his sudden and unforeseen appointment to a ship precluded the possibility of my giving it either verbally or in writing. And, oh ! what suspense he must have endured during that long and bitter interval—long and bitter to both of us ! Is he no longer anxious for my reply ? My head grows giddy with the thought ! Yet I gave him ample opportunity to advert to the circumstance. ‘ You left us suddenly, Mr. Cleveland,’ I said, ‘ after the ball.’ I would have intimated to him that his letter had duly reached me ; but it would not have been becoming in *me* to introduce the topic. Merciful heaven ! how shall I solve the mystery in which my fate is involved ! * * *

“ I resume my pen. At breakfast, we talked over, as usual, the incidents of the evening. Something was labouring in my father’s thoughts. It related to the three-tailed bashaw who had pestered me with his stupid talk at Sir Jasper’s party. On these occasions, mamma, you know, is a mere cipher. He hemmed thrice to clear his throat. I have observed that all civilians hem, when they have any grave remark to make. ‘ You have effected a conquest, my dear Louisa,’ said he, ‘ and so rapid a one, that it might be described in the three words of Julius Cæsar, which conveyed to the Court of Directors—I beg pardon, I mean the

Roman senate—one of the most memorable of his victories.’ I could scarce forbear smiling at a mistake so natural to an old civilian, who troubled his head so little about the Roman senate, and of course worshipped the Court of Directors, although I perceived what was in reserve for me. ‘My friend, Mr. Lawson, chief of the Sudder-ul-Dawlut, first member of the Board of Trade, and second of the Board of Revenue, will be here this morning to make overtures to you of the most important kind. Fortunate girl! so soon to have won the heart of the most eligible civil servant, in rank, respectability, and fortune, our settlement can boast!’

“I would fain have replied, Eustathia, but the suddenness of the communication overpowered me, and my silence was attributed to the feelings so becoming to young ladies on similar occasions. Five minutes had not elapsed, during which I sat absorbed in deliberation as to the best means of escaping the gilded fetters prepared for me; when the loud grunt of palanquin-bearers, whose noise is always proportioned to the dignity of the functionary they bear on their shoulders, and growing deeper and deeper as they approached the flight of steps that ascended to the verandah, announced the arrival of the individual who had condescended to throw his glove at me. I will continue my letter,

when this horrid scene is over, should I be sufficiently recovered from the awful trial to resume it. * * *

“Eustathia, what an eventful two days for your poor friend! It is all over. The pageant has vanished. I have been wooing, like the Grecian artist, the image ‘he himself had wrought.’ On that letter, which I had religiously deposited in the most secret recess of my ebony escrutoire, whose sacred folds I had encircled with a braid of my own hair, and over which I have alternately thrilled with hope and trembled with fear—but you shall hear. I am now calm and composed; but it is the tranquillity of despair. I am to be led next Monday to the altar, the bride of the eligible civilian, to whom parental authority has consigned me; and mamma has been looking over the box of millinery she purchased from Madame Grammont’s; for the victim is to be garlanded with fillets befitting the sacrifice. But you shall hear.

“Scarcely had my admirer seated himself near me, than I was left to the most dismal *tête-à-tête* I ever experienced. But after a due allowance of hems, he began to unfold the purpose of his visit. ‘I am permitted, Miss Scribbleton, to submit my humble pretensions to the highest earthly happiness I can presume to hope for on this side the grave,

that of calling you mine.' It was a most funereal exordium of a courtship, I thought, to talk about the grave. But I heard him to the end of the chapter, and thinking it best to be candid, frankly told him, with the usual expressions of gratitude for the honour—preference shewn me—sincere regret, and a great deal of the phraseology current on these occasions,—that my affections were pre-occupied, that I had no heart to bestow ; ending according to the best precedents with a shower of tears. The civilian, after a few set speeches signifying nothing, retired with a low bow, and I heard him conversing with my father for nearly an hour, as they paced to and fro the verandah. Oh, what relief I felt, when I at length heard the receding grunts of his palanquin-bearers, as they were carrying home their honourable burden !

“ Eustathia, I will not detail to you the scene that ensued with my father. ‘ Affections pre-occupied,’ said he, ‘ at eighteen years of age ! I should like to know what young ladies have to do with affections.’ At length, I yielded to the stern demands of paternal authority, and imparted to him the treasured secret of my heart. ‘ Lieutenant Henry Cleveland, of H.M. ship *Euryalus* !’ he exclaimed. ‘ A lieutenant of the navy ! And was it for this that a costly education has been conferred on you—

and the most eligible offer in the settlement just made to you !’

“ I will not harass you with details. You may be enabled to form an accurate estimate of my misery without them. Would you think it, dear Louisa? My father has had an *éclaircissement* with Henry. It seems that the letter—that letter on which my fancy has so long banquetted—the letter was not destined for me, though superscribed ‘ To Louisa.’ And do I live to tell the tale? This Henry Cleveland, it now appears from his own avowal, addressed me at the Edmonton ball only in those general unmeaning gallantries, which are due from every well-bred man to a fine young woman ; and having danced with me several dances in the course of the evening, he called on me as a point of good manners the next morning ! But he had long cherished an attachment to Louisa Pople, our next-door neighbour—Pople !—Eustathia, what a name ! and having written that letter to her, had folded it in his handkerchief, till a favourable opportunity of giving it should occur, from which it had fallen on the sofa when he sat beside me. It was found, I have often told you, by Fanny Gregson, my mother’s maid, who, seeing that it was addressed to ‘ Louisa,’ placed it carefully on my toilette, taking it for granted it was a love-letter,

addressed to myself. It seems also, from Mr. Cleveland's explanation, that Miss Pople was the object of pursuit, which brought him to our Edmonton ball. Oh, Eustathia, would that I were not so far removed from the solace of your sympathies! But pity your unhappy friend, and think of the hardships of her lot.

“Next Monday, I am to be married to this rich civilian. Papa tells me he has settled upon me eight hundred pounds per annum, and that, next year or the following, I shall be mistress of a handsome establishment in England, and surrounded with every comfort and luxury which affluence can bestow. Oh! Eustathia, pity your poor friend—thus doomed to irretrievable sorrow. Your wretched but attached,

“LOUISA SCRIBBLETON.”

THE SCRIBBLETON PAPERS.

II.

THE editor of these MSS., in the exercise of a fair discretion as to those parts of them which he deems fit for publication, did not feel himself authorized to withhold the following letter from Mrs. Scribbleton, despatched, it should seem, a few days subsequently to that addressed by her daughter to her sentimental correspondent at Edmonton. In this interval, the young lady appears to have retracted her reluctant assent to accept the affluent civilian, who had offered her his hand, and to have shrunk back, with the horror natural to a young lady teeming with sentiment and romance, from the wretchedness of a comfortable settlement and a splendid establishment. It has been already hinted, that Mrs. Scribbleton, from the imperfections of an education more suited to her original condition than that to which Mr. Scribbleton had raised her, was liable to occasional

errors of diction and orthography. The editor, however, thought it not incumbent upon him to correct her letter in either of these respects, lest, by so doing, he might deprive it of a certain *Doric* charm and simplicity, as a transcript of the first impressions made on a lady of a certain age, transplanted from a more congenial circle of tea-drinking dowagers, in one of the suburban villages of our metropolis, to a new world, peopled by a new race, whether European or Asiatic, and presenting, in its moral and physical aspects, nothing that could have been dreamt of in her humble philosophy. He has subjoined a few annotations, without which the text would be, in some places, as unintelligible as the most perplexed passages of Persius without the aid of a Casaubon or Rigaltius:—

“ To Mrs. Pople, just opposite to the Bell,
at Edmonton, near London, Middelsex.

“ Maderass, in the East-Ingys.

“ Dear Mrs. Pople :

“ I prommised faithfully to write you by the first post, but, to my surprise, I find that no posts, two-penny or genneral, go from here to London ; and when I asked a soldier officer to direct me where I was to find a post, he told me that it required great interest with the governor to

meet with a good one. So, like a blockade, I asked my husband to apply to the governor, and he was quite cross and snappish, and said that Captain Froth was laughing at me. For I find that all the letters go by sea and there is no mails here at all. And now, Mrs. Pople, I have so much to tell you about this hot-landish place, I know not where to begin. And I have been in such flustrums ever since we got here, and though they call the place a settlement, and I thought from that I should find every thing comfortable and easy, I never was so unsettled in all my life. Lord, ma'am, what a place it is for Christen-folks ! And then my frite to see so many blacks about us, and all almost naked. I was quite shocked. And, would you think it, Mrs. Pople ? Gregson, that I took out as lady's-maid, has turned out no maid after all, for she would hardly put a pin into our dress, or curl up Louisa's hair, or comb out my tate, or empty a single slop ; and the other morning, when we were quite overcome with the heat, and could not do nothing for ourselves,—for the clymate is so hot that English people, when they first get here, can hardly put one foot before the other,—I most particklerly desired Gregson to stir about and wait upon us more briskly, yet she dawdled and crawled along as if she had no life in

her. Now, my dear Mrs. Pople, wasn't this very inconsiderate of her? But the murder was out the next day, for she told me she was going to get married to a shop-keeper, who buys all the goods as comes from Europe,—for so they call England in this country;—and so we are obliged to put up with a stupid black woman, who don't understand a word I say to her, and the more I put myself in a passion with her, the more stupid she is. And Mr. Scribbleton says it is foolish to bring out English maids to Ingy, and that the blacks make much better maids than they do.

“The folks here are very proud, and think themselves mighty genteel. For my part, dear Mrs. Pople, I wish I was once more at dear Edmonton. ‘Hoam, sweet hoam, nothing beats hoam,’ as the poet says. For we can't get a nice comfortable ruber at this place; and that puts me in mind that Mrs. James Moss did not pay me half-a-crown, when Dr. Hipkins and I had four by honours and the deel, and when she was so angry that we scored her up two tricks for revoking, which was all owing to her thinking so much of her black sarznet, when that stupid boy Ned let a cup of coffee fall over it. Perhaps you will ask her for it and send it to me when you write. But lord, ma'am, what fine dinners they give here!—

and such quality hours !—they never set down to dine before eight. Mr. Scribbleton had a party to dine a few days since—and not half nor a quarter of the things were touched. Some young ladies, indeed, did taste a little of the sweets, but not more than would physick a snipe. And there was such a surlyn of beef that went away without being cut—a matter of fourteen lbs.—and the next day I asked what was become of it, and they said it was all eat up by the parry-ahs*—some voracious wild animals I suppose, for they devoured all that was left, though it would have served for a dozen people. And so I went into the kitchen, or what they call a go-down,—why, I can't tell, for instead of going down, I had to go up a set of steps to it. But you know I always made it a practise at Edmonton, to go into the kitchen every morning, to set things to rites, and to see there was no waste. But I thought I should have died when I put my head into it. Lord, what a place ! The internal regions are a joke to it. Such a smoke, and such smells, and such messing ! No stew-pans, no sauce-pans, no nothing ! But my husband tells me that the ladys here never trouble their heads about the kitchen. I'm sure it will be long enough before I can touch the victels that have been pawed about

* The fragments are consumed by persons of the Pariar caste.

by their black hands, and so I eat nothing for many days, Mrs Pople, but baker's bread; but judge my horror when I was told that all the bakers had black hands as well as the cooks. Yet my husband says, the hands of the natives are as clean if not cleaner than ours; now how can that be, for they are black as sut?

“Dear me, Mrs. Pople, you can't think what a number of servants every body keeps here. Mr. Singleton told me he had nearly fifty. Lord, said I to my husband, we shall be eat out of house and home! And then he told me that one would not do what another would—and there must be one to do this, another to do that; one to clean shoes, another to run of errands; one to wait at table, another to carry things to the kitchen. Oh, dear! said I to myself, what would Mrs. Sims do in this country, who never hires any but a servant of all-work? One thing, however, gives me pleasure. There's no occasion to lock up tea and sugger here, for the black servants never eats any thing we do. Their religion will not permit them. I was thinking it would be a good thing to teach their religion to our English servants; don't you think it would? I never left my bunch of keys for half an hour without missing an ounce or two of my best Souchong.

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“But, oh, Mrs. Pople! there’s been such a kittel of fish to fry! Come, I’ll tell you all about it, chapter and verse. Oh, such a rumpus! All owing to our Louisa, poor dear roamantic girl. You must know that, when Mr. Scribbleton sent for me and Louisa, it was to get her married, and he had agreed with his friend Mr. Jeremiah Lawsun that she should marry him, for he is the most legible person for a husband in all Maderass, if they should like each other; and Mr. Lawsun is a great man, Mrs. Pople, and is very rich, and means to return to England next year, and live in some great square, quite in stile. At first, when they told me that he belonged to two different boards, I thought it was no such great catch for Louisa; for I said to myself—and are we dragged all this way for the poor girl to marry one of the play-actors after all? For you know, in our country, when they talk of the player-folk, they say Mr. So-and-So belongs to the boards of Common-Garden, and Mr. This-or-that-and-the-other, to the boards of Drury Lane; and so for want of knowing how things are called here, when they told me that Mr. Lawsun belonged to two or three boards, I was foolish enough to set him down for a stage-player. But no such thing he is at the head of a court they call the sudderall

dolly,* or something like it; but Captain Froth explained it all, and said that it is an apple-court from the silly courts, to set them right when they are wrong. No wonder, then, Mrs. Pople, the poor man is so much fatigued every day, he had hardly time to come a courting, for there must be always I suppose something to set right in the silly courts, or they could not be called by that name. But, can you believe it, dear Mrs. Pople? The poor denuded thing, after humming and hawing, off and on, for two or three times, would not have him after all. To be sure Mr. Lawsun was stiff and formall, and so cross that he seemed as if he was angry with his own shadow for following him. Still there's many a miss would have been glad to have stood in Louisa's shoes and had him for a husband, and if he had been cross and ill-tempered after they were married, would have given him as good as he could bring. But no, she said, it was like swallowing a dose of physick. Upon that I said, we must all swallow physick, if it was for our good. But you must know she fell in love with a young gentleman of the navy she danced with at Edmonton, and Gregson found a letter directed to Louisa, that had fallen out of his pocket when he called on us the day after the ball, and instead of

* The Sudder-ul-dawlut Court, or Court of Appeal.

bringing it to me, put it into Louisa's riting-desk, and so she has been stark mad for the man ever since. And as ill-luck would have it, he came out to the Ingys in one Hugh Reilly's* ship; and then, when Mr. Lawsun proposed to her, she said she had not a heart to bestow, for it was on board a ship with young Leeftenant Cleveland. So my husband went on board Hugh Reilly's ship, and then there was what he calls a *clear siezement*;† and the young man said he was not in love with our Louisa, but with another Louisa—who shall be nameless—and then he said he had dropped a letter from his pocket, which he was going to beg our Louisa to give to your Louisa—bless me the secret's all out—and all the fuss that has happened was owing to this letter. Oh, Mrs. Pople, what a taking was our poor child in! She had so many historical fits, one after another—there was never any thing like it. And then she consented to have Mr. Lawsun, and then she would not—and the proud stif gentleman was angry, and said she might go farther and fare worsen, and then took himself off in a huf; and my husband says, it all comes of reading novels. So we have all three of us been at sixes and sevens ever since."

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* The *Euryalus* frigate.

† Ecclaircissement,

Then follow some minute details of her daughter's sufferings on this occasion, which the editor thinks are described to more advantage in the young lady's letter to her Edmonton correspondent, Eustathia; and as that letter unfolds some important events relative to the Scribbleton family, he did not think it consistent with his duty to suppress it.

“ Madras, April 18th, 18—.

“ My beloved Eustathia,

“ The struggle is over, and the cherished dream of my earthly happiness dispersed like a vapour of the night. A fatal light broke in upon me, as I told you in my last letter. It flashed only to render more visible the deepening gloom of fate that hung over me,—the chilling prospect of dragging along, for the rest of an embittered existence, the dull prosing companion, to whom, in the first paroxysms of my anguish, after the heart-withering explanation of Cleveland, and goaded by the ceaseless importunities of my father, I had yielded a reluctant assent—a companion,—oh! Eustathia, what a freezing sensation, even in this hot climate, comes over me at the thought!—a companion, I say, united to me by no sympathy of mind, but linked artificially with my destinies by the sordid chain of worldly advantage. Oh! poverty, I exclaimed, thou that art blindly shunned as a curse, and de-

precated as a dæmon, by the unthinking idolaters of fortune, give me thy coarsest fare, clothe me in thy most ragged attire, let me live beneath the smoky rafters of thy meanest cottage, I shall be happy, if love, and the hallowed choir of domestic affections that follow in his train, hover near me ! Can the false, candle-light glare of pomp and ostentation brook a moment's comparison with the calm obscurity of a life gliding, like a gentle brook, through some secluded valley, while blest with that which enriches the peasant with a treasure that nobles might envy—that treasure of the soul, which no moths can corrupt, no thieves can steal? No. I sigh not, after the fashion of my sex, for a costly establishment, or a glittering equipage, nor for saloons lighted up with a thousand lamps, and echoing to midnight revelries. Oh ! for a hovel, warmed only with love, through whose casement shines only the modest taper, whose ray invites the way-worn traveller to its humble but hospitable cheer ! Give me but this, I should live and die content. Yes, Eustathia, for to you I unfold every secret of my bosom, before this fatal explanation, most gladly would I have shared with Cleveland his paltry lieutenant's pay ; let the young ladies of the settlement turn up their noses at it, if they will ; it would have been enough to have screened

us from every ill, and to have satisfied every want.
But why do I talk of Cleveland?

Dear fatal name, rest ever unrevealed,
Nor pass these lips in holy silence sealed!

And what is Cleveland now to your poor Louisa? A vision of the night, that has sped away for ever, leaving my bosom sterile and desolate, like the spot which, according to some rustic superstitions, a fairy has deigned to honour with a nightly visit, on which they say no herb will again grow, no flower blossom.

“ And it was in such a mood, whilst I was reclining on the couch chewing the cud, as Shakspeare says, of sweet and bitter fancies, that I received a visit from the pompous, stiff civilian, whom I had unwillingly accepted. Indeed, I was so lost in my reveries, as to be for some minutes insensible of his approach. Heavens! Eustathia, how unlike a lover! I have read somewhere, translated I believe from some ancient author,* a little dialogue between Cupid and Jupiter: ‘I have a fancy,’ said the thunderer, in his usual official tone, ‘to become a lover; instruct me, my child, in the mysteries of the art.’ ‘Not with that austere brow,’ replied

* This pretty dialogue is in Lucian. The editor of the Scribbleton MSS. is not aware of any translation through which it could have reached the young lady.

Cupid, 'will you attain so much as the rudiments of it. You must lay aside your ægis, and subdue those tones that are wont to make Olympus tremble, or you will frighten the nymphs from your presence. You must take lessons from the Graces, and tread airily and lightly along, for love and majesty dwell not together.' Would that this Jupiter of the Sudder-ul-dawlut, phlegmatic by nature and proud and crested from habit, would profit of Cupid's hint, and begin to make love when he has learned to be pleasing! Well, Eustathia, he began the discourse by recalling to my mind the faint, half-uttered acceptance of him, extorted from me just after that cruel elucidation; and could he have touched a string that vibrated a harsher discord to my soul? But it was rendered still more discordant by the stately language, peculiar, they tell me, to civilians, and the tall grenadier words that strode from his lips, keeping time as it were to the dead march in Saul; for his utterance was so slow and dirge-like, that I had ample time to reflect on the most befitting mode of retracting my resolve. 'Remind me not,' I said, 'let me beseech you, of that ill-advised assent. You are too generous, I trust, to bind me to a pledge, which my heart disowned while my lips uttered it. Mr. Lawson, I cannot be your's.'

“ Startled by an avowal for which he was so little prepared,—for he had taught himself to consider wealth a complete compensation for the absence of every fascination by which a woman is to be won, and in Anglo-Indian society money is the only divinity which is sincerely worshipped,—he stood for a while speechless. When, however, he had recovered his surprise, after the usual number of *hems*, he began thus : ‘ I understand, then, Miss Scribbleton, that, in contravention of the consent to my propositions you so unequivocally gave me, and in express violation of a solemn promise, not more accordant with my wishes, than your own happiness, and the admonitions of your parents’— ‘ Talk not to me of happiness, I pray you,’ I exclaimed, interrupting a long speech, that was about to be discharged upon your poor Louisa ;—but the man was determined to finish his period, which I am persuaded he would have done, had it been at the cannon’s mouth,—‘ you wish to annul your engagement,’ he continued. ‘ The infraction of treaties, whether between nations or individuals.—Here, most luckily, the interposition of a *hem*, unusually long in its duration, gave me time to escape, and as I flew to my bed-room, I distinctly heard the words—‘ a measure as repugnant to sound policy as to’— I would hear no more, though I have no doubt he

finished the sentence to his own satisfaction. What a relief, my dear, to hear the creak of his palanquin, as he threw his lordly person into it, and the welcome chorus of his bearers, as they bore it off on their shoulders! Had I inflicted pain upon my pompous admirer, I should sincerely have regretted it; but I well knew that his pride and self-love formed a panoply of steel, that rendered him impassive to the repulse.

“Pity your unhappy friend, my Eustathia, for I had to endure the chilling frown of my father, and the sneers of the whole settlement, for hesitating to grasp so rich a prize whilst it was within my reach. As for my civilian, I will leave you to form your own estimate of his sufferings from a few passages of a long letter which he sent me the following day, and which I transcribe for your amusement. You will observe with surprise that it consists of detached paragraphs, each of them numbered, according to the established usage of official correspondence in India:—

‘ To Miss Louisa Scribbleton,

‘ Sudder-ul-Dawlut Court, Madras,
25th March, 18—.

‘ Madam,

‘ 1. As you were pleased yesterday morning, the 24th instant, abruptly to leave the room, without hear-

ing me to the conclusion of the few remarks, which I deemed it fitting and expedient to make, in reply to your unexpected retraction of the promise of your hand, made to me on Friday the 18th instant, I have thought it not unbecoming to convey to you my sentiments in a more fully developed form than your sudden disappearance permitted on that occasion.'

(I do not transcribe the second paragraph, as it is only the same thing expressed with greater verbosity.)

' 3. Having long had the pleasure of being acquainted with your excellent father, and having before your arrival understood from my worthy friend, that your affections could not possibly be pre-engaged, and that your education had bestowed upon you, in addition to the gifts with which nature had endowed you; those accomplishments which are befitting the wife of a man of high standing in the Honourable East-India Company's civil service, I had, on the 30th ultimo, the honour of an interview with you. During that interview, madam, I learned, from your own avowal, and to my great grief, that your heart was plighted to Lieutenant Henry Cleveland, of H.M. ship *Euryalus*, or words to that effect.

' 4. Accordingly, accompanied by your father, I requested the honour of a conversation with Lieutenant Cleveland, who assured us, on the word of an officer and a gentleman, that he had never aspired to the hand or the heart of Miss Louisa Scribbleton, and that

there must be some strange and unaccountable mistake in the matter.

‘ 5. On the 18th instant, as per paragraph 1st, you solemnly promised to marry me within a few days, and, in contemplation of such marriage, my solicitor prepared a deed of settlement, vesting, in the event of my death, the annuity of £800 per annum and £10,000 now standing in my name in the English funds, to your use, in pursuance of certain trusts to us hereafter created for that purpose.

‘ 6. Judge my astonishment, madam, when you told me, yesterday, that you never could be mine, in contravention of your promise and breach of your engagement. And when I was dilating upon the injustice and inexpediency of so outrageous an infraction of treaty, you hastily withdrew, leaving me to finish my sentence, without deigning to hear it, in breach of the established usages of decorum and good-breeding.’

(Here follow several paragraphs nearly to the same effect).

‘ 11. As, however, you deem so lightly of my qualifications to render the connubial state happy and agreeable, and as there are other young ladies in the settlement, to whom I may not appear despicable in point of person or fortune, I am not unwilling to receive your retraction, and in so doing, beg that you will accept my sincere wishes, that you may meet with an offer as sincerely tendered, and as likely to promote

your comfort and interests, as that which you have so rudely repelled,

‘ Madam, from your obedient servant,

‘ JEREMIAH LAWSON.’

“ I am rejoiced to inform you, that our civilian’s wounds have not proved incurable. Miss F., it seems,—would you believe it, Eustathia?—brought all her rusty artillery of charms to play upon the first member of the Sudder-ul-Dawlut, and the second member of the board of revenue, as soon as she found the field open to her approaches; it is currently believed that it will be announced in a few days. For this brilliant victory, the political economist is indebted, they say, to a long dissertation, during a *tête-à-tête* at the Lady Governess’ ball, on profits, wages, labour, population, and preventive checks, which enabled her to surprise his heart by confounding his faculties. And I have read in a French author, whose knowledge of our nature is supposed to be unbounded, that we are never disposed to call in question the intellectual superiority of those talkers whom we least understand. Most assuredly, if to puzzle and perplex be a proof of superiority, Miss F.’s supremacy is undeniable.

“ But my own sorrows—sorrows which surely no

woman ever before endured,—leave me no leisure for the microscopic concerns of such beings. Alas ! what a waste solitude is the bosom of your Louisa, since its rightful sovereign so cruelly deserted it ! Louisa Pople, Louisa Pople, how blest a lot is thine ! not the less blessed in having so soon to change that uncouth dissyllable for the mellifluous name of Cleveland ! Yet I can scarcely repress some expression of astonishment, that he should have made so strange a choice. There must be some mystical enchantment in dead grey eyes, a nose screwed into a perpetual sneer, like a pistol in full-cock, red hair passing for auburn by the kind misnomer of her flatterers, a raspberry-and-cream complexion—but I forbear the hateful theme. One dear image alone glides before me. That melodious voice still vibrates on my ear !—Eustathia, last night, the most deadly glooms came over me.—No, my dear girl, I cannot survive it.—A few dying requests will, I am sure, find in my Eustathia a faithful executrix, when I am no more.”

* * * *

Here follow sundry trifling bequests, amongst others the augmentation of the bow-legged messenger's salary, by an additional four-pence a week ; and a new brass collar, with the motto “ *Adieu, chère Flore,*” engraved on it, for Louisa's little

spaniel of King Charles's breed, left *en pension* with her friend, when she embarked for India, with particular directions for his decent interment beneath the sycamore tree in her garden, should he be prematurely called to his forefathers. The letter was kept open, it seems, for some weeks, for it is continued in a key very different from the desponding one with which it commenced.

* * * *

“ I have survived it, Eustathia ! Thanks to a friend—for I have found one—and, start not, of the other sex. You may remember that I mentioned a Sir Jasper Nettlesome in one of my letters. He is a judge of the Supreme Court, a man of excellent sense, a bachelor, and penetrated with a sovereign contempt for all civilians, particularly for my late pompous admirer. He is not young, it is true, but not so *very* old neither. However, he came to console me, and began by attacking what he calls my romance. ‘ And so, Miss Scribbleton, you imagine you could be happy with one whom you really loved, in a cottage ? ’ ‘ Most superlatively so,’ I replied. ‘ And do you know what a cottage is ? Have you well weighed the advantages of a low roof, bad smells, damp that make the walls as blue and ropy as those of a charnel house—and keep the smoke from ascending your chinney,

for damp is the most powerful auxiliary of smoke in marring your comforts? Probably you have hung up in your cottage a few choice books; Lord Byron's works, for instance. In a few months, *Childe Harold* will be glewed by must and mouldiness into half a canto, if not reduced, by a process as sure as that of the philosopher of Laputa, to its original paper, as blank as before the poet scattered his conceptions over it. Or, perhaps, being a lady of taste, you have hung your little apartment in the French style, with some classical story; for instance, the Judgment of Paris. But the damp of this amiable cottage of yours, in a short time, will have rendered the sentence of the judge ridiculous, by giving Venus a black eye, and so effectually lopping off one of Juno's legs, as to make her rather a candidate for the hospital, than for the prize of beauty. And then, what so charming as love under a thatched roof! To be waked every morning by the chirping of sparrows nestling in the eaves; and what a museum of live insects is nurtured in the hospitable recesses of the thatch!—enough of all conscience for a course of entomological lectures—all creeping things—moths, scarabæi through all their varieties; ear-wigs, long-legged harvest-men, one of whom perhaps will tumble into your tea-cup, whilst a whole detachment whirl eddying round

in your cream-jug, till the mass is almost curdled into cheese.' 'Enough, Sir Jasper; how can you draw so ridiculous a picture of a cottage?' I replied; 'because I think that, with the man of my heart, I could be as happy in a small cottage as in a large mansion, it does not follow that my idea of it excludes comfort or even elegance.' 'So then,' retorted the provoking creature, 'a little comfort and some few luxuries are not so incompatible with love, after all? But don't you think an equal portion of love might exist in a wider space, and in an apartment of twenty by thirty, with the privilege of dilating and contracting the lungs without suffocation, as when you are crammed, yourself, your half-pay lieutenant, and your numerous progeny, into a house whose dimensions are every moment reminding you of the house appointed for us all?'

"In this style of banter, the singular humorist, Eustathia, used to go on in our occasional *tête-à-têtes*, till he had actually begun to convince me, that a certain share of the conveniences and comforts, which affluence only can place within our reach, was a great improvement upon wedded love. But you will hardly think it possible, my love, when I tell you that the knight went still further—and actually made me a proposal. 'Alas! Sir Jasper,' I said, 'can a heart blighted by disap-

pointment, vacant of every affection'—'Vacant !' he interrupted, 'the sooner the vacancy is filled the better ;—and as for the blights you are talking of, that heart of yours has too much sensibility not to put forth its buds and blossom into happiness.' I answered—I know not what ; but it was something the monster chose to interpret into consent. So, in a few days, your poor Louisa is to become the lady of Sir Jasper. I have not time to describe Sir Jasper's character. He is evidently a man of talent ; and I believe irritable and waspish. But he abounds with the milk of human kindness, which, though occasionally liable to acetous fermentings, is rich and generous in its quality ; not like the mawkish insipid good-nature we meet with in ordinary beings, but ardent and vehement in making even those happy whom he most torments and teazes. In a word, Eustathia, he is like my beloved author Rousseau ; and it was this discovery that inspired my first sentiments of predilection for a being whom I frankly acknowledge to be a strange and whimsical one. Like Jean Jacques, he thinks the whole world is conspiring against him ; he has also the wayward moody peculiarities of that great genius, and—"

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Here an *hiatus* occurs in the MSS., which the editor, after the most diligent researches, is unable to supply.

THE INDIGO-PLANTERS.

AN ALMOST TRUE TALE.

IN India, as every body knows, the day does not sink to rest through the soft gradations of twilight, but an almost sudden darkness falls, like a curtain, over its glories. Rachael Hyssop and her sister Lucy, the daughters of an indigo-planter in one of the Bengal districts, had been sitting, for some time before sun-set, in a small bungalow on the banks of the river, which formed, on one side, the boundary of the lawn or compound belonging to the mansion in which they resided. It was what in England might be called a summer-house, though perhaps of too rude and primitive a construction to deserve the title. Its chief recommendation was its coolness: the zephyr that waned amidst the luxuriant tresses of the maidens having, as it flew over the Ganges, dipped its wings in the refreshing waters.

Rachael and Lucy led somewhat of a monoto-

nous existence, and their chit-chat in this retired spot was one of their principal enjoyments. Hither, therefore, they were wont to carry their work, or some grave book,—for the *index expurgatorius* of Brother Tubby proscribed all light and even elegant reading;—and hither, if Rachael perchance was detained by household cares, Lucy sometimes flew to a stolen interview with Charles Sutherland. It is not pleasant to divulge secrets; but the truth must be spoken.

Brother Tubby was a *soi-disant* missionary. He had, by combined luck and dexterity, got conveyed to India without license and without sanction from, or connexion with, any society in England, and by appearing literally “all things to all men,”—drinking brandy with some, pandering to others, and preaching to pious persons what he did not himself either practise or believe,—he became useful to many and therefore unmolested; consequently, he found the luxuries of the Mofussil (to which he prudently confined himself) a delightful exchange for bread and water and the tread-mill, which he narrowly escaped in England.

“Indeed, Lucy,” said Rachael, at one of these sisterly conferences, “you are unreasonably prejudiced against that good man,”—for Tubby had been the subject of their conversation, which had

gradually risen to the tone of debate—"I am sick of his name," rejoined Lucy, and an angry shade came over her fine dark eyes, as she spoke. "Is he not," continued Rachael, "devoting his youth, or at least the vigour of his years (the missionary was at least forty) to the conversion of the heathen, and bringing back the lost sheep to their fold?" "Bringing back sheep to a fold from which they never strayed," retorted Lucy, "seems to me, Rachael, little better than nonsense." "Oh, Lucy! foolish perverse girl," said the other; "oh that you could take delight, as I do, in his scriptural discourse—those sweet words of comfort—" "Which he misapplies and profanes," interrupted her sister, with an asperity little akin to her feelings, which were kind and charitable to all. "For my part, I am shocked to hear those sacred words prostituted on every light and trivial occasion, and made a distasteful jargon by his mode of applying them." "Poor lost girl!" murmured Rachael to herself, and unwillingly dropping the conversation, Lucy being not only the better logician, but having a vein of quiet satire at her command, which sometimes hit off a caricature of the missionary with so hideous yet so faithful a resemblance, as sometimes to extort a smile from the prim, screwed lips of Rachael herself.

The Hyssops had resided at Rohanpoor for some time. Saul had conferred a decent education on his daughters whilst they were in England, but the early loss of their mother had rendered it desultory and imperfect. Of the two brothers, Jacob and Christopher, the former only resided with him. Christopher was the strangest creature on earth. It would put common language out of joint to describe his almost giant stature, his enormous stride, and hideous visage. The natives, at first, particularly the women and children, were half-inclined to hide themselves, when this Cyclop walked forth. Their terrors vanished by degrees, for his features, at least as much as could be seen of them from beneath a profusion of hair and a dense brushwood of beard, were rather prepossessing. They betokened, it is true, something of misanthropy, but it was that sort which inclines a man to shun rather than hate his species ; and even this, he manifested only to his own countrymen : the natives he loved and sought. So uncouth a creature, it may be supposed, had some rough criticisms to endure in a confined society of English, where there was an unusual scarcity of topics. Accordingly, not a single point of his person or dress escaped. Even his horse came in for a share of their satire ; and it must be owned, that he had so little in common

with that noble quadruped, as to look like a composite out of the odds and ends of the animal creation. But when Christopher bestrode him, it was for all the world like Ariosto's magician mounted on his hyppogriff. He resided in a hovel, the architect of which, never dreaming of its being tenanted by so huge a being, had so curtailed its dimensions, that if, on awakening in the morning, Christopher indulged in a hearty stretch, his legs projected considerably beyond the door, which was seldom or never closed.

In the same village, but at the opposite ends, as if to mark their moral contrarieties, dwelt the two missionaries, Tubby and Eustace; the latter a Catholic priest, but, unlike his fellow-labourers in the vineyard, cultured with various learning, sacred and profane. Tubby, on the other hand, was gifted with a memory unusually retentive of scripture-reading, but his diction was diffuse and entangled. What he wanted, however, in clearness, he made up in vehemence of expression. He was for taking the Hindoo mind by storm, affrightening it into surrender, like a beleaguered fortress;—discoursing to them, in a rude sort of Bengallee, of endless torments, the worm that never dies, a small handful of the elect, born, nursed, dandled to predestined happiness; the rest, as stubble, to be cast into the

fire; with other doctrines equally comfortable and alluring. *Padré Eustace* went to work differently; he admonished more than he denounced, and he denounced only violations of the moral law, not imperfections of faith or errors of doctrine. His presence was consoling and his ministry useful. *Tubby* hated the *Hindoos*, and had unfortunately influence enough over the narrow sectarian feelings of the indigo-dealers, to infuse the bigotry of his own sentiments into theirs. Into the heart of *Lucy*, he could inspire nothing of the kind. It was a soil unkindly to the bad passions.

There are mystic sympathies that draw coarse minds to each other, and in the family of *Saul Hyssop*, *Tubby* was a frequent inmate. Nay, he had ventured to cast an eye of affection on *Lucy*, who cordially despised him. It had been better for poor *Rachael* had she despised him too. She was a fanatic, and fanaticism is a troubled passion, that has an affinity to love. *Padré Eustace* visited them rarely; but *Christopher* was his sworn friend, Indeed, the *Padré* was the only European he could endure. Matters stood thus at *Rohanpoor* in August 18—.

The capital of the *Hyssops* was limited, but they had recourse to expedients of doubtful morality towards the *ryots*, whom, on every occasion,

they laboured to circumvent. In these acts, strange as it may seem, they often found at the presidency that candid interpretation, or qualified censure, which is equivalent to protection. Tubby was in habits of confidential correspondence with one of the secretaries, who was suspected, and with some reason, of not being free from a sectarian tinge; so that, when complaints were sent up to Government against the indigo-planters, it sometimes happened that Tubby was himself the referee, as being on the spot, and from character and calling an unexceptionable witness.

About this time, a treaty had been going on between Saul and Jacob, and one Rutaub Doogal, a cultivator of the Kaysht caste, for the lease of some lands, of which Rutaub was in actual possession of the fee-simple, or what is nearly equivalent, of the zemindary rights. The sum, however, they offered being much below Rutaub's valuation, he refused to complete the assignment.

The two brothers had many anxious consultations as to the means of getting over the difficulty, and at these conferences Tubby was present. It was the vaunt of this man, that he had made numerous converts among the Hindoos. He had perhaps found proselytes amongst a class, to whom, belonging to no caste and doomed to the lowest

offices of life, any change was desirable; but they were converts that did as little honour to their new faith, as to that they had abandoned. One of these christianized Hindoos, a pariah and an outcast, cunning and mercenary, making his Christianity, such as it was, a cloke for sensual indulgences, the two Hyssops found possessed a conscience which, after a few appliances of brandy, was sufficiently pliant for their purposes. Rutaub still remaining obstinate, it was resolved in their conclave to affix upon him some act, which, by the loose practice of the zillah courts (an anomalous jumble of Mahomedan rules with English notions), might be held equivalent to an actual assignment. Under the pretext of paying Rutaub the 5,000 rupees he demanded, the christianized pariah placed a bag, to all outward appearance containing coin to that amount, under the arm of a peon, carefully impressing on the man's mind, that he was conveying the sum which the Hyssops had agreed to pay Rutaub. This, indeed, was but a slight circumstance, but it was thought that it would come strongly in aid of other evidence. In pursuance of this virtuous scheme, the pariah took the bag from the peon, whom he dismissed, and entered Rutaub's dwelling with the bag in his hand. But not a pice was paid to Rutaub. The two Hyssops,

however, instituted a process in the zillah court, for a specific performance of a pretended agreement to grant them the lease, alleging a payment of the consideration-money; and, though at that time there was an arrear of many hundred causes, contrived, to the surprise of every body, to obtain almost an instant hearing—and what was still more extraordinary, though Rutaub's vakeel nearly burst his lungs, while he insisted on the conclusive fact of the non-existence of a deed of assignment, the Hyssops contended with success that the defect was supplied by extrinsic evidence, the pariah swearing on the Gospel that he had actually paid Rutaub the money, and the peon bringing some faint confirmation to his deposition, by the fact of having carried a bag containing that weight, as he verily believed, in sicca rupees. The pariah swore, farther, that he put the assignment into Rutaub's hand, which he carefully read over, and having deposited the rupees, which he had previously counted in his desk, was proceeding to execute the deed, having actually taken a pen for that purpose, when he was suddenly seized with a fit of sneezing, and deeming it a bad omen, requested till the next day to make his *septa-parayan* (seven prayers)—and from that time, under various pretexts, refused or evaded its execution.

Such was the feeble presumption, on which a decree passed for the Hyssops, who took instant possession of a large paddy-tract, to irrigate which Rutaub had expended considerable sums, destroying many flourishing crops, and, amidst the triumphant exultations of Tubby, pulling down a temple dedicated to a goddess of no inferior rank in Hindoo mythology: an inexpiable profanation in the eyes of the natives. The ejected party said nothing, but was not the less bent on retribution. Now and then, indeed, he expressed his discontent, likening British justice to a ravenous beast, that springs from the ambush of what it calls law, on the weak and defenceless. In a short time, there was a hurrying to and fro, among the caste;—peons despatched through the different provinces, in which that caste was most numerous;—a sullen brooding over the wrong sustained by one of their body, and it was remarked that Rutaub himself, though urged by several Europeans to appeal against the decision to the Sudder Adawlut, obstinately rejected the advice.

Disturbances, and even popular risings, are not rare in the indigo-districts, and, on such occasions, so completely transformed is the passive character of those creatures of endurance, that they rush into acts of outrage. In this instance, it was a kind of

subterraneous combustion, collecting its might in secrecy and silence. The two Hyssops were deeply tintured with the hate so often indulged by the vulgar classes of Europeans against the Hindoo race, and these, the merest pieces of humanity, took it into their heads that beings of the noblest proportions, and stamped in their mien with the blazonry of nature's aristocracy, were created their inferiors, and fit only to hew their wood and carry their water. In their fancied security, the Hyssops laughed at Christopher, who argued but too truly of the indications he had observed; whilst Tubby infused into them renewed doses of that spiritual pride, which blinds us to consequences. Ignorant, that in the rites of the Ummaul, or goddess, whose temple they had pulled down, the prolific agencies of the universe were allegorized, the Calvinistic missionary proclaimed, from his pulpit and in field-sermons, a savage triumph over the demolition of the heathen altar. But though the building itself was little more than a rude heap of stones stuccoed with chunam, its demolition rankled deeply in the minds of the natives, and accelerated their schemes of revenge. Lucy, indeed, spared not her sarcasm and satire upon brother Tubby; yet the more did he seek opportunities of inflicting on her his wearisome preachments, and sometimes in a style of dis-

course strangely intermingling the phraseology of earthly passion and spiritual rapture.

As for *Padré Eustace*, skilled not only in the vernacular idiom of the *Hindoos*, but the hidden language in which they dissemble their thoughts, he deemed it befitting his pastoral character to warn the *Hyssops* of what might be expected from their resentment,—giving them pretty strong hints of their covert but inexpressible sense of wrong, when their religious prejudices were insulted. “Remember,” said he,—but he spoke in vain—“that in our father’s house are many mansions, and that whilst we are waiting that fulness of time, when all shall be gathered into one tribe, we are permitted to use no means of conversion but those of reason and persuasion.”

In the meanwhile, the *Hyssops* had erected, at a great outlay, their indigo-works on the lands, of which they had so unjustly obtained possession. Poor *Lucy*, if she ventured to breathe her repugnance to *Tubby’s* triumph over the demolished shrine, was compelled to endure a series of vulgar insinuations, that outraged her delicacy. *Rachael* had become, by degrees,—such was the havoc of fanaticism in a bosom naturally gentle,—dead to sisterly affections. But *Eustace* and *Christopher* knew that a plan was in agitation for the forcible

ousting of the Hyssops, and endeavoured, ineffectually indeed, to impart to them their apprehensions of the approaching feast of the *Dusrah*, which would bring large assemblages of the robust and numerous caste of the Kaysht to Rohanpoor and its vicinity. But their systematic contempt of the natives, as a feeble and timid race, blinded them to the danger. A body of sepoy, and half a dozen armed peons from the magistrate or collector of the district, would easily, they imagined, quell any tumult.

It was to find a short respite from the incessant cant of Tubby, that Lucy, one afternoon, leaving her sister to the uninterrupted solace of the preacher's society, was glad to betake herself to the bungalow, to enjoy the refreshing coolness of the gale that played along the rippling waves of the Ganges, and—what was still more refreshing than the breeze—a few minutes' converse with Charles Sutherland, whose horse had of late instinctively found his way to the same place at the same hour. Such interviews it would be unfair to call assignations: nor were they purely accidental meetings. The young persons had long known and liked each other, till liking was improved into love. Sutherland was the registrar of the zillah court, and there will, therefore, be the

less difficulty in guessing through whose good offices it was, that the Hyssop cause was heard out of its rotation, at a time when so many hundred less favoured suitors were cooling their heels month after month, in the sickly expectation of a hearing. Lucy remained, for some time, in that listening anxiety, which is at once so tormenting and so delightful to lovers. At length, the well-known clatter of his horse's hoofs became more and more distinct, but at a much quicker pace than usual. "Lucy," said Sutherland hastily,—dismounting and leaving the steed to his own discretion till the syce came up puffing and blowing to take charge of him,—"Lucy, dear angel, mischief is brewing. But be not alarmed; not a hair of those black tresses shall be hurt. A large body of the Kayshts have been gathering to avenge the loss of Rutaub's cause, and Tubby's insolent treatment of them. It were well if that canting hypocrite were disposed of. The pulling down the temple has goaded them to madness. But my life shall be devoted to the preservation of yours," he continued, as the poor girl, half dead with affright, leaned upon his bosom. "I must ride off with all possible speed to the officer commanding the station, for military aid, should it be required, and send off, in the mean time, a body of the collector's

peons to put down the disturbance. Be comforted, Lucy"—and sealing the exhortation with the warmest kiss which affection could imprint upon her lips, he leaped on his horse and disappeared in a moment.

The rapid night-fall of India affords young ladies no time for those tender meditations, which harmonize so well with the soft twilight of a summer evening in England. Darkness, indeed, descended more rapidly than usual, enveloping the whole horizon in its dunnest mantle, while the unwonted chafing of the mighty river with its shores, boded all the fury of the expected monsoon. Anxious to return, Lucy had moved but a few paces from the spot, to which the fearful intelligence had rivetted her for some minutes, when a hateful form stood phantom-like before her. The sight curdled the life-blood in her veins, and had it been the fiend who personifies all evil, she would not have more gladly exorcised him. "Lucy," said Tubby, before she had recovered from her surprise and terror, "this is no time for coyness. I have long yearned after you with eyes of affection, even as Boaz looked upon Ruth. Why do you shun me? I propose to you honourable wedlock. You are like unto a beauteous plant, and should not wither away in barrenness, but throw out goodly

branches as the rose tree of Sharon." A pressure of the hand, not unlike the gripe of a bear, accompanied this effusion of nonsense, and an effort to force her towards a bamboo settee, at once alarmed and incensed the poor girl, who, innocent and unsuspecting as she was, could not avoid putting a fearful interpretation upon his intentions. With a degree, however, of corporeal strength, which is never wanting to the aid of virtue in the hour of its need, she struggled from his grasp. The execrable Tartuffe, however, dragged her along, her strength beginning to desert her, but still enabling her to scream loudly for help. "There is no help for a perverse child of wrath," he went on, twining round her with a satyr-like embrace, that nearly stifled her cries.

But help was nigh, and it came in the uncouth but thrice-welcome shape of Christopher, who felled the brutal assailant to the ground with a blow that rendered it doubtful whether Scripture or common sense would suffer any more distortions from his eloquence. Probably not calculating his enormous strength, Christopher had dealt a blow that would have better suited an ox, for during Lucy's broken explanation, life seemed to have left him. "Eh, what's all this—Lucy—Tubby! Here, lean on my arm," he exclaimed, as he proceeded slowly

home with her. "Saul," said he, as he entered the house, "here's a pretty kettle of fish!—so much for preaching. Your daughter is safe, thanks be to heaven—and the ruffian Tubby lies sprawling in the bungalow." Lucy, in faltering accents, explained the matter as well as she could. Strange as it may seem, every apprehension about Lucy was absorbed in the fears of all for the fate of the missionary, and they rushed forward to his aid. "For shame, brother," said Christopher, in a voice that would have split a rock; "do you tender your daughter's honour at no higher value, that you should give a moment's thought to that vile impostor?" Saul made no reply. As for Rachael, it were want of charity to attribute her unsisterly conduct to any other cause than the morbid fanaticism which had for awhile closed the avenues of her heart to every other sentiment. The party hastened to the bungalow, expecting to find Tubby in his last agony.

At that instant, sounds reached their ears, of which at first they did not comprehend the import. There was a splashing of oars in the river, and a multitude of voices constrained to a lower key than that in which the natives usually converse. But the mystery was soon explained; for, in a few seconds, and just as they had got within a few

paces of the bungalow, the whole of that combustible structure was in flames. Rachael uttered a scream of terror. "He will be burned to death," she cried; "help, uncle Christopher! help the dear man, if he is still living!" "Help," returned he, with the utmost coolness; "see, he can help himself!" for Tubby was roused from his stupor when he heard the crackling of the flames, and was now running towards the house with a rabble of natives at his heels. "Make haste and fasten your doors," said Christopher; "I will see what I can do with them." So saying, he opposed his giant-form to Tubby's pursuers, whose numbers were every minute increasing.

The parley with the robust leaders of the affray was held in Bengalee, and it was animated on both sides. They urged the wrongs done to the whole caste, whose maxim, handed down from father to son, was not to pause longer under an injury than sufficed for its atonement. "The Sahib logan (English gentlemen) gave bad law to good men, and good law to bad men." All those who appeared as spokesmen on the occasion, expressed their regard for Christopher. But there was a deep-rooted determination in their speech and countenances which did not escape Christopher. "There will be hot work of it," he said to himself.

‘Padré Eustace and I must do what we can to allay the storm which my brothers and this missionary have conjured up.’

The crowd grew every moment denser around the dwelling of the Hyssops. To those who saw it from the verandah, it was as a wavy sea of white turbans. Christopher in vain essayed to divert them from their purpose, and elbowing his way with a kind of forty-horse power, disappeared, to the great alarm of Lucy and the rest of the party, who felt a sense of protection in his muscular frame and powerful arm when he was present. To their great satisfaction, he soon returned, with Eustace hooked on his arm. The night was dark, but its darkness was fearfully relieved by massalgees, whose torches flung a fiercer glare on the revengeful features of the chief performers in this singular drama. Nor was there any lack of music, of noise at least that would have roused the dead, from trumpets six feet long, dholes, gongs, and other astounding instruments of an Hindoo concert. Father Eustace implored them to desist. “My children,” said he, “if these people have done you wrong, their law, which is just and equitable, will give you redress. Make your complaints to the gentlemen at Calcutta.”

“No, no,” they cried ; “the wild elephant has

trodden down our paddy, and you ask us to call in the tiger." The torches glared fiercely, and were suddenly extinguished. But an intenser blaze burst across the horizon. It proceeded from the indigo-factories and warehouses of the Hyssops, which were about a mile distant. Baffled and dejected, Eustace and Christopher returned to the affrighted family. Brother Tubby was seated at the table half-stupified before a bottle of brandy. "They will kill him," exclaimed Rachael. "Save him, save him, dear uncle!" "We will do our best," said the benevolent Eustace, and whispering to Christopher that his best chance of safety was to cross the river in one of the budgerows moored at the end of the compound, the latter took the preacher up in his hands, and throwing him over his shoulders, ran with him as a tiger carries an antelope, threw him into a boat, and having loosened its moorings, left him to the mercy of the tide, which was running nearly eight miles an hour, without so much as a pair of oars to keep his frail vessel in the middle of the stream. Christopher thought this the only chance of his escaping undiscovered, and returned to aid the *padré* in appeasing the tumult.

But the natives were intent on revenge—that wild justice, which is alone permitted to those to

whom formal justice is denied. Christopher found the dwelling in flames. Not a moment was to be lost to save the inmates. Unmindful of the new and more imminent danger, Rachael inquired what had become of the good man?—"Gone to supper," replied Christopher, "with half a dozen alligators, who don't stand on much ceremony for an invitation." She sunk down with terror. Lucy, endued with a firmness more suited to the exigency, roused her sister from her stupefaction, whilst her uncle and the *padré* forced the Hyssops to the compound, to give them a chance of escaping by water. But, suspecting their design, a party had intercepted their flight, and were unceremoniously hauling them along, when Christopher rushed forward to their release. As the sea opens a trough to the bark that cleaves its billows, the crowd opened to his bulky frame; and as soon as he had extricated his brothers from the rabble, he urged them to immediate flight, whilst the kind *padré* conducted Rachael and Lucy towards his own humble dwelling. But at this instant a horseman at full speed advanced. It was Charles Sutherland, followed by half a dozen sowars under a European officer. The tumult was appeased as if by magic. The ringleaders fled through a country too intricate for pursuit, and in less than ten minutes, during

which the dwelling-house and the indigo works were burnt to the ground, night resumed her silence. When every thing was quiet, Sutherland returned to the spot where he had left Lucy and Rachael under the protection of their uncle and Eustace, and taking them under his arm, "they shall find an asylum at my house," he said. A buggy was at hand. There was no time for maidenly coyness on the part of Lucy, and the resolving and re-resolving usual on such occasions. The journey was neither long nor eventful; the horse did not stumble, nor the vehicle break down, and they were soon at the young registrar's residence. There, after they had partaken of some refreshment, Lieutenant-Colonel N—— entered the hall with a prayer book in his hand. Charles led Lucy, blushing, of course, like the morn. "Who gives the lady away?" cried the colonel. "I," returned the zillah judge of the district. The colonel opened the book at the wrong place, and had proceeded a little way in the baptism-service, before he found out his mistake. "Rather premature," he quietly observed, as he rectified the error, and proceeded to unite Charles Sutherland and Lucy Hyssop in holy wedlock.

The two Hyssops found their way to Calcutta, where they endeavoured to make out a case to

entitle them to indemnity. But they deceived themselves, and were ordered to England. By a series of miraculous escapes from alligators and tigers, Brother Tubby drifted down to a military station, where he would willingly have resumed his preachments. But his zeal was so little under the restraint of common sense, that it was thought inexpedient to permit his remaining in the vicinity of a regiment of sepoys, who are strongly disposed to view with alarm and jealousy the efforts of the missionaries. His real character was at length discovered; and when it appeared that he had usurped functions for which he was not qualified, and had obtruded himself into a class to which he had never belonged, and upon whose unimpeachable moral reputation he was bringing disgrace, he was sent home to follow the fortunes of his patrons. The Sudder Adawlut reversed the decree of the Zillah Court; and Rutaub was again placed in possession of his lands. Christopher and the *padré*, humble in their wants, and desiring nothing beyond the simple comforts they shared with the natives, lived and died amongst them.

THE KAZEE OF EMESSA.

ORIGIN OF THE STORY OF SHYLOCK.

THE origin of the story of Shylock the Jew, and the pound of flesh, in Shakspeare's *Merchant of Venice*, is now satisfactorily traced, like many, if not most, of the ancient tales of Europe, to the East. Sir Thomas Munro had the merit of the discovery,* but the entire story has never yet, we believe, been given to the English reader. The following version of it was purchased at Calcutta, about thirty years ago, by the gentleman who has favoured us with it. The MS. from which it was taken once belonged to the celebrated Claude Martin. The original author is of course unknown: the property of such compositions as this is lost through age.

There lived once, in the same city, an affluent Jew and an indigent Mussulman. The latter fell

* See his *Life and Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 64, and Malone's Edition of Shakspeare.

at length into such distress, that he went to the Jew, and begged a loan of a hundred dinars, saying that he had a favourable opportunity of trading with the money, and promising half the profits in return for the favour. The Jew, though a great miser, had long cast the eyes of affection on the Mussulman's wife, a woman of extraordinary beauty, but of strict chastity, and who was fondly attached to her husband. He hoped, however, that if he could involve the poor man in distress, and force her to intercede for him, he might gain his wicked purpose. With this motive, therefore, he spoke kindly, and said, "if you will give the pledge I shall require, you shall have the money without interest." The Mussulman, somewhat astonished at his liberality, asked what pledge he wanted; and the Jew replied, "consent that, in case you do not pay the money by a given day, I shall cut off a pound of flesh from your body." But the poor man, fearing the dangers and delays which might befall him, refused.

In a couple of months, however, being hard pressed by poverty and the hunger of his children, he came back and took the money; and the Jew had the precaution to call in several respectable men of the Mahomedan faith to witness the terms of their agreement.

So the Mussulman set off on his journey, which was prosperous; and sent the money in good time to his wife, that she might discharge the debt. But she, not knowing what pledge he had given, and being much perplexed by domestic difficulties, applied the money to her household purposes; and the penalty of the bond was incurred.

It was some time after this, that the Mussulman was joyfully returning, with large gains, and in the confident belief that he had escaped from the snares of the Jew, when he fell among thieves, who plundered him of all, and he came home as poor as he went out.

Presently, the Jew politely called to inquire after his health; and next day returned to claim the fulfilment of his bond. The luckless merchant told him his story; the relentless Jew replied, "my money or the pledge." And thus they went on some days in hot contention, till the neighbours, interfering, advised them to refer the matter to the kazeer.

To the kazeer, accordingly, they went; who, after a patient hearing of the cause, decreed that the merchant had forfeited his pledge, and must submit to the penalty. But to this he would by no means consent; protesting against the legality of the decree, and claiming a right of appeal. Upon which

the Jew desired him to name the judge with whose decision he would be content ; and he selected the kazee of Emessa, as a man of profound knowledge and strict justice. The Jew agreed to the appeal, on consideration that both parties should bind themselves to accept his judgment as final : and this point being settled, they set off together for the city of Emessa.

They had not gone far when they met a runaway mule, with his master in pursuit, who called out to them to stop the animal or turn him back ; and the merchant, after several vain efforts, flung a stone at the beast, which knocked out his eye. Upon this the owner came up, and, seizing the poor merchant, accused him of blinding his mule, and insisted on the full value. To this, however, the Jew objected, as he had a prior claim ; but he told him that he might come with them if he liked, and hear what the kazee might have to say in the matter. And so the muleteer joined them ; and the three pursued their journey together.

At night they reached a village, and as it was dark, they went quietly to sleep on the flat roof of a house ; but, by and bye, there was an uproar in the village ; and the merchant, unable to resist the pleasure of mixing in the tumult, jumped suddenly down from the roof, and fell on a man who was

sleeping below, and caused his death. The two sons of the deceased laid hands on the unfortunate man, and threatened to kill him in retaliation. But the Jew and the muleteer opposed their design, unless they would first satisfy their demands; and advised the young men to come along with them, and lay their complaint before the kazeer. To this the heirs of the deceased consented; and the five proceeded next morning on their journey together.

Next day, they overtook a poor man whose ass had stuck in the mud, and which, with all his efforts, he could not get out. He begged them to help him; and while the others took hold each of one corner of the load, and he seized the bridle, the unlucky merchant lugged at the tail, which came off in his hands. The peasant was enraged, and said he must pay for the beast, which was now useless; but the others told him to be quiet, and come along with them, and tell his story to the judge.

Shortly after this they came to Emessa, and were astonished at seeing a venerable man, with a large turban, and a robe which came down to his heels, and riding on an ass; but disgracefully drunk, and vomiting; upon inquiry they learnt that he was the censor.

A little while after, they reached the mosque,

which they found full of people engaged in gambling. And passing on, they met a man tossing about on a bier, whom the people were carrying forth to his burial; and when he protested against the measure, appealing to the bystanders whether he were not alive, they assured them in reply, that he was certainly dead; and the poor man was buried.

Next morning, they presented themselves before the kazeer, and began all at once to make their complaints; but the kazeer told them to stop their clamour, and speak one at a time.

So the Jew began: "My lord, this man owes me a hundred dinars, upon the pledge of a pound of his flesh; command him to pay the money or surrender the pledge."

Now it happened that the kazeer and the merchant were old friends; so when the kazeer asked him what he had to say, he frankly confessed that what the Jew had alleged was all true; but he was utterly unable to pay the debt: hoping, no doubt, that the contract would be declared null. He was, therefore, astounded at hearing the kazeer declare, that if he could not give the money, he must pay the penalty; and when the officers were commanded to prepare a sharp knife for the purpose, he trembled, and gave himself up for lost.

Then the kazeer, turning to the Jew, said, "Arise, take the knife and cut off the pound of flesh from his body; but so that there be not a grain more or less. Your just right is one pound exactly; take either more or less, by ever so little, and I will make you over to the governor, who will put you to death." To which the Jew replied, "it is not possible to cut it exactly, there must needs be a little more or less." But the kazeer told him, it must be a pound exactly, and that any other quantity, being unjustifiable, would involve him in guilt.

The Jew, being frightened at this interpretation of his right, renounced his claim, and said he would forgive the debt altogether. "Very well," said the kazeer; but if you have brought the man so far, on a claim which you cannot maintain, it is but reasonable that you should pay him for his time, and the support of his family during his absence."

The matter was then referred to arbitration, and the damages being assessed at two hundred dinars, the Jew paid the money and departed.

Next came the muleteer, and told his story; and the kazeer asked him what the value of his mule was: the man said it was fully worth a thousand dinars before it lost its eye. "This is a very easy

case," said the kazeer; "take a saw, cut the mule in two; give him the blind half, for which he must pay you five hundred dinars, and keep the other side yourself." To this the man very much objected; because, he said, the mule was still worth 750 dinars; so he preferred putting up with his final loss, and would give up the suit.

The kazeer admitted that he was at liberty to do so; but he must make amends to the man for such a frivolous and vexatious suit; and the poor muleteer kept his blind mule, and had to pay a hundred dinars in the shape of compensation to the merchant.

The next party were then called upon to state their grievance; and the kazeer, on hearing how the man had been killed, asked the sons if they thought the roof of the college was about the height of the house that the merchant had jumped off from. They said they thought it was. Upon which he decreed, that the merchant should go to sleep on the ground, and that they should get upon the roof and jump down upon him: and that as the right of blood belonged to them equally, they must take care to jump both at once. They accordingly went to the roof; but when they looked below, they felt alarmed at the height, and so came down again; declaring that if they had ten lives, they could not

expect to escape. The kazeer said he could not help that ; they had demanded retaliation, and retaliation they should have ; but he could not alter the law to please them.

So they too gave up the claim ; and with much difficulty got off, upon paying the merchant two hundred dinars for the trouble they had given him.

Last of all came the owner of the ass, and told the story of the injury which his poor beast had suffered. " What another case of retaliation ? " said the kazeer. " Well, fetch my ass, and let the man pull off his tail." The beast was accordingly brought, and the man exerted all his strength to revenge the insult which had been put upon his favourite. But an ass which had carried the kazeer was not likely to put up with such an indignity ; and soon testified his resentment by several hearty kicks, which made the man faint. When he recovered, he begged leave to decline any further satisfaction ; but the kazeer said, it was a pity he should not have his revenge, and that he might take his own time. But the more he pulled, the harder the vicious creature kicked ; till at last the poor man, all bruises and blood, declared that he had accused the merchant falsely, for that his own donkey never had a tail. The kazeer protested, however, that it was contrary to practice to allow a

man to deny what he had once alleged ; and that he must therefore maintain his suit. Upon which the poor fellow said, he saw how it was ; he supposed he must pay as well as the rest ; and he begged to know how much. So after the usual pretences and discussion, he was let off for a hundred dinars.

When all the plaintiffs had left the court, the kazee, collecting the different fines which he had imposed upon them, divided the whole amount into two equal shares, one of which he reserved for himself, and the other he gave to the merchant : but observing that the man sat still, and seemed very thoughtful, he asked if he was satisfied ? “ Perfectly so, my lord, and full of admiration of your wisdom and justice ; but I have seen some strange sights since I came to this city, which perplex me ; and I should esteem it a kindness if you would explain them.”

The kazee promised to give him all the satisfaction in his power ; and having learnt what had perplexed him, thus replied :—

“ The vintners of this city are a very dishonest set of people, who adulterate the wine, or mix water with it, or sell it of an inferior quality. So the censor, every now and then, goes round to examine it ; and if he should taste but ever so little at each

place where it is sold, it will get at last into his head : and that is the way he got so drunk yesterday. The mosque where you saw them gambling has no endowment, and was very much out of repair : so it has been let for a gaming-house ; and the profit will serve to put it in order as a place of worship. And as for the man who excited your compassion, I can assure you he was really dead, as I will shew you. Two months ago, his wife came into court, and pleaded that her husband had died in a distant city, and claimed legal authority for marrying again. I required her to produce evidence of his death ; and she brought forward two credible witnesses, who deposed to the truth of what she said. I therefore gave a decree accordingly, and she was married. But, the other day, he came before me, complaining that his wife had taken another husband ; and requiring an order that she should return to him ; and as I did not know who he was, I summoned the wife before me, and ordered her to account for her conduct. Upon which she said, he was the man whom she had, two months ago, proved to be dead ; and that she had married another by my authority. I then told the man that his death had been clearly established on evidence which could not be refuted ; that my decree could not be revoked ; and that all the relief

I could afford him, was to give orders for his funeral.”

The merchant expressed his admiration of the kazee's acuteness and wisdom, and thanked him for his impartial judgment in his own behalf, as well as for his great condescension in explaining these singular circumstances; and then came back to his own city, where he passed the rest of his days in the frugal enjoyment of the wealth which he had gained at Emessa.

Note.—It is necessary to add, for the information of those who may not be aware of the facts, that wine and gaming are strictly forbidden by the Mahomedan law; that, according to that law, evidence can never be received in support of a negative; so that a fact, which is legally established, cannot be refuted; and that the officer, who is called the *censor*, is one whose duty it is to look after the general morals of the city, to see that no fraudulent practices are used by the tradespeople, and to notice every instance of immoral or irregular conduct.

THE UNIVERSAL TESTATOR.

Apprenez que tout flatteur
Vit au dépend de celui qui l'écoute.

So says La Fontaine, and La Fontaine knew the world, problematical as it may seem, without experience, for he never lived in it,—the surest proof that his maxims have truth and common-sense on their side; whereas Rochefoucault, in every respect a man of the world, has scarcely one that is true.

Old Topping refined upon the aphorism of the French poet, although nobody better understood the practical uses of flattery than himself. But Topping said to himself, “if I can play upon the avarice as well as the self-love of others, I am planting my artillery against two weak places at once, and can enter by which breach I please.” Thus he reasoned and thus he acted, and by this method contrived to glide through the last fifteen years of his existence, as on a smooth unruffled stream, that wafted him pleasantly onwards to the last bourn of nature. Improvident speculations in

commerce, or expensive habits in the earlier part of his career, had kicked down a fortune, that must needs have been considerable, for he was the friend of three successive nabobs of Arcot, to whom he lent money at exorbitant interest, and as a civilian, till he foolishly retired from the service, his intimacy with the worst governors of Madras, in the most flourishing periods of Madras corruption, enabled him to wriggle himself into the best appointments in their gift.

Topping was a general favourite. He had access to every table in the settlement in the character of a rich bachelor; for there is a certain undefined and undefinable power in money, that is felt, they know not how, by those who are never likely to reap the slightest advantage from it. Wherever any thing pleasant or hospitable is going on, there you are sure to meet with persons who have no imaginable passport into decent society but their real or supposed wealth. Old, ugly, hobbling in their gait, repulsive in their manners—vulgar, illiterate, mean—what matters it? They have passed through that pool of Bethesda which heals every disease, social or moral. Fastidious beauty inclines her ear to their talk;—the coarsest ribaldry is tolerated, the clumsiest joke is sure to tell, if they condescend to utter it. Old Jack Topping, how-

ever, had other titles to the esteem of his contemporaries. He was an exquisite player on the violin—sung delightfully—and talked agreeably, and like a man who had seen much and observed what he had seen. Whatever, therefore, might be the hospitalities and caresses he met with, the balance was in his favour. He lived, of course, at little expense, and gave few entertainments at his neat, pleasant bungalow, which was situated at Vepery, and retains to this day the name of “Topping’s Garden.” But when he gave a dinner, it was conceived and executed in a style that baffled imitation. His wines were cooled to the exact point of refrigeration;—the cooling-tub not saturated with saltpetre, but the water sprinkled with such gentle aspersions of it, as to impart the most delicious freshness you can imagine in the space of a few seconds;—his fish, in the general scramble of a Madras fish-bazaar, admirably fought for by a compedore selected for the muscularity of his limbs; and his other viands so skilfully cooked, as to excite even the delicate appetite of ladies, whom, at other tables, you would see picking up their rice grain by grain, like the merchant’s wife in the *Arabian Nights*, who feasted at night with ogres.

Yet to all these agreeable influences, as I have hinted already, he added one that recommended

him still more powerfully. He had abandoned all thoughts of returning to England, for he was one of a class of old Indians who cared little about England, and never dreamt of returning to it. I recollect many of this extinct class, for India since that time has been considered only as a resting-place on the road to affluence; and the last of them were a triumvirate, each a man of real, or what is the same thing, of reputed wealth,—Jack Topping, Webb, and Westcott. The influence I speak of, was an almost universal persuasion he had contrived to diffuse every where, that, meaning to die at Madras, his dearest and best friends at that settlement would be his legatees. “I have no friends or relatives in England,” he used to say; “my last relation was a sixth cousin, who with great ingenuity made out what he called his affinity, and sent me over a table of consanguinity to put it beyond a doubt. The dog told me in his letter, that he was a cheesemonger, in a comfortable way, and hoped that, when I came home, I would make his house in Bishopsgate Street, and his cottage at Islington, my own, because *it stands to reason* that I should not go to a hotel, where the charges are so high, whilst my own blood and kin were willing and happy to see me. This relative died a year or two ago, *as it stands to reason* he

should, and I have not been pestered with any of my family since."

Now, to use the cheesemonger's phrase, "it stands to reason," said certain of Jack Topping's bosom-friends, that he should remember us in his will. We have always shewn him kindness; always a place at our table—and we never got up a party without sending him a card. "Therefore, we shall get something." This was as much as each would acknowledge in words; but in the private recesses of the thought, there lurked day-dreams and night-dreams of affluence, which the mines of Potosi would hardly have realized. Yet the syllogism was imperfect, for avarice is by no means an expert logician. The defect lay in the premises. Jack Topping was not worth a rupee. But if this was overlooked by the inferior class of mere legatees, each of whom would have been satisfied with a few thousand pounds to add to the little nest-egg with which they hoped to retire to England, it was overlooked also by the select few, to whom, with injunctions of most religious secrecy, he had breathed confidential whispers of conferring the residue of his vast accumulations. Amongst these he had unlimited sway. No magician could do such wonders with his agents as Jack Topping could with his three or four expectants.

One of them, the most grasping of misers, opened his hoards, spreading all before him for his immediate use when a sudden emergency arose, that might put him to the trouble of drawing on Calcutta, or the Manillas, or Batavia, for a few thousand pagodas. They vied with mutual jealousy in their ministrations to his wants or caprices, on the slightest hint that the service would be acceptable; for he had given every body to understand that his funds were dispersed in securities all over the world, by far the greater part being in the adamantine keeping of the Three per Cent. Consols and Long Annuities of his native country.

“I have waited on you, Mr. Topping, agreeably to your hospitable entreaty,” said a thick, muddy-faced Armenian, who talked excellent English, but the richest as well as the most avaricious of that mercantile tribe, as he ascended the steps of Topping’s garden-house, having just alighted from a dingy green palanquin, so crazy that it creaked even to dissolution, as Jacob Arathoon’s heavy carcase freed its miserable complement of six bearers from his weight. Topping shook him by the hand, with a courtesy which none could resist, Jew, Turk, or Armenian; taking care, however, as Jacob’s hand was greasy and fat, to sprinkle unobservedly

over his own a few drops of rose-water, that stood on a table ready for use on like occasions.

“Mr. Arathoon, I am rejoiced to see you,” returned Topping, “and as it is on business of a private nature, I have used the freedom of inviting you to my solitary repast, that we may talk it over quietly together.” Jacob, who loved good living, but had always an eye upon business, was for despatching the business first and then the dinner. “He must have some large sum,” said he to himself, “he does not know how to employ advantageously, and wants to invest it in piece-goods, or raw silk, or indigo;”—for Jacob, with the rest of the world, gave Topping credit for being by far the wealthiest capitalist in the settlement.

“No business yet,” said Topping; “let us dine first;” and Jacob sighed forth an internal amen to the proposal. So saying, he led the way to the saloon, where Jacob’s eyes, instinctively attracted towards every thing that had value, lighted upon a sumptuous sideboard furnished with a service of plate in the English fashion, whilst other senses were soothed with the fragrance of several covers, amongst which were two fine roeballs, the most delicious fish in the world, and a capon so exquisitely cooked, that, though at every other table commonplace and uninviting, at Topping’s it was a treat

and rarity. The meal being concluded, the intervals of which had admitted occasional bumpers of some rare old Madeira, which was a proverb of excellence all round the settlement, Topping saw his guest making sundry attempts to introduce the business on which he had been so urgently sent for. "Let us finish a cool bottle or two of claret" (and Topping's was of a most delicious vintage), "and then it will be time to think of the cares of life." Never had Jacob's unmeaning face more resembled a full harvest-moon than it did now. He had dined most luxuriantly, and without expense, a reflection that enhanced the luxury a hundred-fold. Topping, who knew where to stop, and could hit upon that precise moment when the heart is most expanded at the least expense to the intellect, at length began in this way:—

"Friend Arathoon, I have long known the worth and integrity of your character. They are sterling qualities, and they are almost peculiar to persons of your community. My own countrymen are vain, arrogant, unfeeling, and selfish." Jacob assented with seeming sincerity to this remark, and indeed he had ample reason for doing so; and listened in still suspense and agonized curiosity to what was coming next.

"Do you remember," continued Topping, "my

first commercial venture with your house, in the year 1780?"

"I do," said Jacob. "It was in a bottomry on the ship *Clive* to the Manillas. And a good venture it was."

"It was," replied Topping; "and it laid the foundation of the few thousand rupees I have been enabled to lay up—not for my own benefit, Jacob, for I am an old man, without relatives or connexions, and it is time for me—but take a bumper of claret whilst it is cool—to call for my night-gown and slippers, and bid the world good-night. A slight pause permitted Arathoon to indulge his astonishment at so singular a preface, and a thousand guesses as to what was coming next. Whatever he thought, it was an agreeable interlude to his reflexions to have the cool claret, which Jack Topping had pushed towards him, under his nose.

"And now, Jacob, it is time to tell you," continued his host, "why I sent for you. First, to reveal to you something that has long pressed upon my mind, and which it imports you highly to know—besides that, the pleasure of your conversation, which is a great treat to me." This was nearly too much for Jacob himself—had he had the slightest idea of the ridiculous or farcical, he would have laughed himself at the compliment paid to him for

an accomplishment he had never cultivated but to drive a bargain or cheapen an invoice. But the fact is, the satire that lurks in flattery is perceptible to gifted minds alone—and Jacob was another guess sort of mind. He, however, could not forbear staring. “Yes, my friend, for the talk of the settlement is the prattle of fools—of folly giving itself the airs of wisdom. And then look, Jacob, at our members of council—is it possible to feel higher respect for such men, than for a conclave of robbers planning together their schemes of plunder? Yes, Jacob, they have plundered this poor country, fattened upon its entrails, and are now picking the bones. Would you believe it? Whitwell has the assurance and credulity to suppose, on the strength of a few civilities, that he is to be the chief legatee of what I have scraped together. No, my good sir, I have seen enough of my own countrymen to be sick of them, and the grimaces of our women, pale, proud, cold as chunam frogs. But what I mean will be better explained by a document.” Topping took out from an escrutoire two papers, having the appearance of testamentary ones. One was in English, the other in the Armenian language. What astonishment did Jacob grunt when he read in his own tongue words to this purpose!—

“ To leave a monument that will endure beyond the passing hour of frail mortality, I bequeath twenty thousand star pagodas for the building and future repair of an Armenian church, to be dedicated to such saint or patron as to the majority of Armenian worshippers may seem good.” The clause went on appointing Jacob one of the trustees for carrying the religious dispositions of the will into effect.

Jacob was lost in wonder. The Armenian church had long been decaying, and a levy on the pockets of the rich Armenians was in agitation—of which Jacob’s contingent would, in his estimation, be a heavy one. What pen, however, can describe the breathless stupor with which, after a few legacies and charitable bequests, Jacob read a clause to the following effect ! “ And whereas I have long looked with disgust upon my own countrymen settled in India, their intrigues and dishonest contentions for emolument, their exactions from the natives whom they pillage and oppress, I do hereby revoke all former bequests by me made in behalf of any person or persons amongst them, and do bequeath and devise, subject to the trusts and legacies herein-before-mentioned, the whole of my property, of what kind soever, here and at Calcutta, and in the English Four per Cents, and Three per Cent. Con-

solidated Stock, to Jacob Arathoon, of the Black Town, Madraspatnam, &c. &c.”

“Let this be deposited in the chest of your church,” said Topping to the wonder-struck, credulous legatee. “I only enjoin you to the most religious secrecy.” Jacob put his finger to his lips, in token of obedience, and leaped into his palanquin with an alacrity that astonished Topping himself who could scarcely have expected such an effect on the squat, heavy, carcase of Jacob. But the dream of wealth so near at hand—for Topping on these occasions took care at certain intervals to bring forth a hollow church-yard cough, the knell of immediate dissolution—made the Armenian as light and buoyant as a feather.

Joy is never uncommunicative. Jacob could not help imparting his good fortune to one or two of the presbyters of the church; and particularly the kind disposition of his patron’s will regarding the Armenian church. Next to the Moravians, the spirit of fraternity dwells with the Armenians more than with any other religious body. “Mr. Topping is dying, Jacob,” they said. “Begin the church. The existing one is crumbling to the ground, and may crush us under its ruin. You will have ample funds before the end of the year, if we contract for its completion by that time.” The

builder, an honest Armenian, was sent for. An agreement was executed on the guarantee of Jacob, and the foundation-stone laid with pomp and ceremony.

After this, Jacob came frequently to soothe the lonely evenings of Topping, though Jacob in sooth was the dullest of created beings; but such was the address of his testator, that the legatee began, on the faith of Jack's accustomed complimentary phrase, to believe himself to be a most entertaining companion. At these visits, Topping occasionally insinuated that, not wishing to disturb his securities, which bore a considerable interest, or that having just bought up a large quantity of Sir Thomas Rumbold's treasury-bills at an enormous discount, or some analogous pretext, he wished for the temporary use of a sum of money; and thus contrived to borrow of that credulous victim some considerable sums, seldom less than two or three thousand star pagodas, on no other security than his simple acknowledgment. Jacob considered this, in the language of Shakespeare, as an "assurance doubly sure"—as "taking a bond of fate." It will be seen, in due time, that in this respect fate was the worst security he could have relied on, for it was fated that not one fanam of the sums thus confidingly advanced was to be paid.

It was, however, with singular complacency that Jacob heard a deeper and deeper cough from the chest of Topping, a sound prelusive of the wealth that in common calculation would, at no great distance of time, be his own. The next morning, the sum was sure to arrive at Topping's garden-house, the peon being strictly charged to observe, with the utmost watchfulness, the state of his health, and to express Jacob's anxious inquiries as to that particular. The report of the peon administered increased satisfaction to the happy legatee, for he said that, whilst he was counting out to him the money, the old gentleman was seized with so vehement a paroxysm of coughing, that it was some time before he could write the chit which acknowledged the receipt of it.

In the mean time, the Armenian church rose magnificently from its foundations. The architect, on Jacob's security, had contracted to finish it in a year, at which time the cost of its erection was to be paid him. Jacob had run his testator's life against this most critical twelvemonth. How frequent, how anxious, during this period, were Jacob's inquiries of Topping's health—how fixedly did he direct his heavy oyster-like eyes towards Topping, for some new token of approaching dissolution—with what a doleful affectation of sympathy, but

real gladness of heart, did he hear the hollow reverberation of the propitious cough! Topping, indeed, had heard of the new church, of its architectural splendour, so unusual in the ecclesiastical edifices of a money-getting and parsimonious people. He laughed at Jacob's simplicity, but made no inquiries of Jacob relative to it; whilst the latter, either from delicacy, or more probably the fear of displeasing his munificent benefactor, kept his lips closed on the subject. At length, the year expired. The church and its splendid portico were finished, and seemed to cast a smile of stately contempt on the meaner buildings by which it was surrounded. But it became necessary to consult Topping, by whose posthumous generosity it had been reared, as to recording his name as the benefactor of the church, on a space left for that purpose in the architrave. "No, Jacob," said he; "I seek for no reputation on this side the grave, to which I am now hastening with accelerated footsteps. (A deep cough.) As my executor, you will of course apply the funds I have specifically left to its uses. It will be then time enough to record my name as the donor in what way you please. At present, let the donation lie buried in honourable silence. Envious and disappointed expectants would set up a cry against me, as a heathen and

unbeliever, and I know not what, for endowing a church belonging to a faith different from my own, when I might have done more honour to my own memory by leaving the funds specified in my will to the Protestant church of St. Mary's, in the fort, which has been long sinking into the same decrepitude as yours. Keep the secret till my death. Alas! I feel it to be fast approaching (a deeper cough than usual), and as the disposition of the money will be in your discretion, let your own name stand forth as the sole patron by whose munificence the structure was accomplished. The truth is, Jacob, I have long had a leaning towards the leading doctrine of your church. I am, like yourself, a Monophysite. I hold, and shall do so at the day of judgment, the unity of Christ's nature, denying the doctrine of many of your Armenian churches, that his divine soul was invested with a human body." Jacob, through whose theological twilight the truth of the Eutychian or Monophysite heresy had long since beamed—a heresy which had been crushed in Armenia in the reign of Justinian, and from that date had taken refuge in India and Upper Egypt—was delighted at his testator's confession. He returned home more and more confirmed of the speedy probability of Topping's demise, though he must of course advance out of his own

proper funds the large sum of eighteen thousand pagodas for the new church; and having mentioned to the pontiff and the elders, in strict confidence, Topping's wish that Jacob's name should be recorded as the sole founder of the edifice, a bait which his vanity greedily swallowed, his name appeared, shortly afterwards, in Armenian and Roman characters:—

A.D. 1788.

Hoc templum re-edificavit

E propriis sumptibus

JACOBUS ARATHOON.

There it remains to this hour, a monument of "Jacob's folly," the designation it has retained ever since.

The few remaining old Indians, who recollect the Indian affairs of this period, and the discreditable courses of Sir Thomas Rumbold and his chief secretary, Whitwell, who administered the Madras government, are full of anecdotes of these personages. Whitwell was Rumbold's jackal, and played his game for him, with a dexterity and acuteness, that eluded the Argus-eyed jealousy of the numerous enemies whom disappointment and envy had raised against him. It was generally known and felt, that Whitwell was to all practicable purposes the governor. Every place of emolument and rank was at his disposition. He contrived,—at a

time when the sepoys were unpaid, or paid only by what were called "Sepoy Chits," or promissory billets in the name of the paymasters, and which they were obliged to convert into cash at a devouring discount, to enable them to procure rice for the day, the public treasury being completely exhausted,—to have unceasing supplies of money pass through his hands from every quarter whence it could be procured. He lavished large sums upon his friends, or rather favourites, with the most undistinguishing profuseness. He placed the most rapacious and corrupt natives in the highest and most responsible offices, to which, by the Company's rules, they were eligible—nor did those rules stand in Whitwell's way when he had a purpose to answer. Nothing could be more glaring than the partiality and injustice with which promotions in both services were dispensed. His intrigues with Mahomed Ali, the then Nabob of Arcot, were the theme of general disgust:—yet Whitwell had a host of sincere and ardent friends, who would have gone through fire and water to serve him. It may seem a problem in our nature, but so it is—the strength of personal attachments is at its greatest height towards those who are capable of serving us, when we are most convinced of their unworthiness. Every body knew that

Whitwell would stick at nothing to advance or enrich him. This was a species of merit, therefore, that came home to the selfish principle more or less kneaded into every man's composition. It outweighed in their esteem a hundred acts of profligacy and corruption, and there are few who exercise a stern moral disapprobation towards failings, from which they are themselves likely to reap a benefit sooner or later. Amongst another class of thinkers, who, deeming themselves birds only of prey and passage, held the comfortable doctrine that India was a carcase to be stripped and plundered, and that he who could get the largest share of it in the shortest time, was the ablest servant of the Company, Whitwell was in still higher odour. Few men, least of all the persons I am describing, think better of others than themselves; but this is a class that are always sceptical of the existence of any virtue, of which they perceive no traces in themselves. Indeed, it is almost impossible to persuade such reasoners that you yourself are honest; nor would you succeed in the attempt by the strongest evidence to your integrity, were it not for the consoling creed which they profess, that he, who proves himself to be honest, proves himself to be, at the same time, a blockhead.

It is now matter of history, that the malversa-

tions of Rumbold's government became the subject of Parliamentary inquiry. The labours of a committee, which sat for eight months, brought forth a mass of criminatory matter in the shape of seven huge folio reports, and D——, it is well known, had obtained leave to bring a bill of pains and penalties against the Madras governor, and Whitwell, the chief-secretary. There is a historic *nebula* over this part of our Indian transactions, which has had many commentators, but little or no explanation. It was never fairly sifted. The Indian squad had then at their command a cluster of close boroughs, and constituted a powerful party in the House of Commons. Rumbold, on his recall, is said to have brought home a considerable fortune; and there wandered about the town rumours, some of them distinct and definite, that he had appropriated considerable sums to allay the flame of public virtue, to which, had it burned steadily, he must have fallen a victim. Amongst others, it was confidently believed by a Company's servant,*—who had his eye anxiously on the whole procedure, and was himself examined as a witness before the committee,—to the latest moment of his existence (and he was a person of the highest integrity and honour), that Rumbold had requested permission

• Mr. Chamier.

to send a copy of the report, with his own remarks in the margin, to the person who had taken the leading part against him, in Parliament, and who had moved, as already said, for a bill of pains and penalties against him, urging with great earnestness the justice of giving due consideration to those remarks, which would be found, he said, satisfactory answers to the charges. The "marginal notes," it is stated, advanced through several successive pages from £100 to 10,000; and if it has never been established that the accuser was bribed, it is quite manifest that the accusation was withdrawn. D—— was, in the strongest terms of implication, charged by Burke* with this piece of corruption.

Whitwell adhered, with a fidelity worthy a better cause, to the interests of Rumbold. He fled to Paris; but Whitwell's secretary, finding that a government proclamation had issued for their apprehension, honourably delivered himself up. Thus the whole proceeding closed. Sir Thomas Rumbold long lived in guilty splendour; and Whitwell, after many reverses of fortune, died, about fifteen years since, in abject poverty, at Paris, where he had for some time subsisted on the reluctant, grudging contributions of two or three persons, whom he had enabled to return home with princely fortunes.

* Speech on the debts of the Nabob of the Carnatic.

This is somewhat of a digression from Topping, and his testatorship. Yet, as the traditions of that period are now nearly effaced, and many of its transactions studiously suppressed, no apology is necessary for having thus lightly touched them. Whitwell was strongly attached to Topping, who had many personal qualifications that rendered his society pleasing and instructive. Their confidence had a singular beginning. Whitwell and Topping had been, on some occasion or other, closetted together for some time, during which the former spoke in the tone of a grave and uncompromising morality upon every topic; for that mysterious carriage of the body, which humbugs the greater portion of mankind into a persuasion of its being an indication of correct and circumspect conduct, was systematically assumed by Whitwell, who had found it of the utmost use to him. Topping's penetration into human characters, however, was too profound to be imposed upon, and in the midst of one of Whitwell's gravest observations, he burst into a loud fit of laughing. The farce was really too much for him, inasmuch as he knew almost intuitively what was going on in Whitwell's mind. The chief secretary stared with astonishment, for Topping was one of the best-bred men in the settlement. But it was like the recognition in free-

masonry. From that moment, Whitwell felt the absurdity of speaking from under a mask. "We know each other—do we not?" said he, seizing Topping's hand. "Perfectly," replied the other.

Yet Topping had the master-key that unlocked Whitwell's soul, whilst the latter had scarcely a guess of what Topping really was. Along with the rest of the settlement, native and European, he was convinced of Topping's wealth—and convinced (so deep a root do the wildest errors strike into the general opinion), without the slightest evidence or presumption, nay, with strong proofs constantly recurring to the contrary,—for Topping, not long before he had adopted the system of making wills, was pressed for the payment of trifling sums. Had Topping applied to Whitwell in these distresses, his purse would have been opened to him without stint or reserve; but through some politic refinement which few could fathom, Topping still passed with Whitwell as a man of unbounded wealth; and it was in one of their confidential evening *tête-à-têtes*, at his garden-house, that he breathed into his friend's ear, under solemn injunctions of secrecy, the intention of leaving him by will the bulk of his immense wealth. Whitwell received the intimation with the greatest delight and the most implicit credence. Topping's life, his age being now advanced

beyond the ordinary chances in a hot climate, was scarcely in any one's estimate of a twelvemonth's value. Why should Topping, a man of the world, and with no temptation or inducement to a superfluous falsehood, breathe such an intention but in perfect sincerity? In short, Whitwell considered the promise as so much wealth, in the shape of a security payable at no distant period, though for the present unavailable.

Whitwell, however, did make it available. To corroborate his intention, Topping had given him, according to custom on these occasions,—for there were many residuary legatees into whom he had infused the same expectations,—a copy of his will. When Whitwell wanted money for his own use or for the exigencies of the government, the Nabob's exchequer being by this time squeezed to a husk, he found no difficulty in obtaining large sums from rich natives like Paupiah or Jyah Pillay, by the production, in strict confidence, of this document. But confidential communications contrive now and then to escape; and it happened, awkwardly enough, that Jacob Arathoon's residuary legacy and Whitwell's crossed each other, as it were, to the great perplexity of both. The same happened to the other persons who were looking forward to the same imaginary wealth. As every one, how-

ever, is a firm believer in his own good fortune, that perplexity soon ceased to disturb them, and the gates of Topping's compound were day by day besieged with the most affectionate inquiries after his health from those who were eagerly praying for his death.

If Topping received payment in kind from Whitwell, it was in the shape of patronage. To many persons patronage is wealth, bringing with it the highest enjoyments which wealth can procure. Through Whitwell's instrumentality, Topping provided for many young men who had come out recommended to him from England. He was enabled to cement by marriage many hopeless attachments cherished by young civilians, who had fallen in love with certain Madras beauties before they were enabled to support them. Wealth is power. In this instance, imaginary wealth was power; and, to his credit be it said, Topping exerted its influence kindly and benevolently. He never wanted money. A slight hint or inuendo that a loan for an occasional purpose would be of use to him, for a season, became almost instantly a round sum of ready money in his hands.

Jack Topping, however, at last, paid the debt of nature. But who shall paint the meeting of the legatees, each frantic with hope, that rushed into

his hall the instant his remains had been deposited in the grave—the grave of many a hope too fondly nursed, too rudely crossed, that lay buried with him ! Smollett’s admirable pencil, that sketched the posthumous scene of Roderick Random’s grandfather, would scarcely be equal to it. For myself, I shrink from the attempt. “The will, the will, the authentic will itself !” exclaimed Whitwell. “Here is my copy.” “And here is mine,” exclaimed half-a-dozen other residuary legatees. Last (for the Armenians, though not dead to the impulses of avarice, are a modest unobtrusive people) was heard poor Jacob Arathoon’s voice, “and here is mine !” producing from his under-cassock a piece of paper greasier than his own face. “And here, also,” continued Jacob, is the clause bequeathing funds for our new Armenian church, for which I have paid by anticipation eighteen thousand star pagodas.” All was despair. Not that the opinion of Jack Topping’s immense wealth was at all shaken; but each found a competitor in each for its enjoyment. The only refuge from despair was the date of each will, for counterparts, regularly sealed and executed, were found to each of the copies he had put into the hands of the several parties to whom he had bequeathed his property. “Mine is of the latest date !” said one; “mine ! said ano-

ther;”—the same key-note ran through the whole circle. What were the astonishment and dismay of each, when they all turned out to be dated the same day! It was clear they had been all duped; more clear still, when they found that Topping had no wealth, but died, leaving behind him debts to an immense amount.

The Armenians were the only gainers; they gained a new church. Nor did they refund a fanam to poor Jacob, who sued them by a bill in the Mayor's Court for a joint-contribution towards its construction, and in addition to the costs of the building,—which to this day is called “Jacob's folly,” and enregistered in the archives of the church, immemorially kept in Greek, Η ΑΜΟΡΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΙΑΚΟΒΟΥ,—had to pay the costs of the suit.

THE SWORD OF ANTAR.

AN EPISODE OF THE ARABIAN ROMANCE OF ANTAR.*

AFTER many brilliant enterprizes; which had brought peace and abundance amongst them, the warriors of the tribe of Abs were assembled, by the invitation of their king, Zaer, in a delightful valley near the spring called Zat al Arsad. After a sumptuous repast, slaves passed round goblets of wine, whilst the young damsels danced upon the flowery turf to the sound of the tamborine and the songs of their mothers. Encircled by the princes, his sons, and by the chiefs of the tribe, King Zaer, who presided with patriarchal hospitality over the pleasures of the day, called upon Antar to indulge the assembly with a song of his composition. All

* This celebrated romance, which is highly popular in all countries where the Arabian language is spoken, extends to no less than twenty-six volumes. The above episode is translated in an article in the *Journal Asiatique* for March 1834, by M. A. CARDIN DE CARDONNE.

were hushed into the deepest silence, when Antar, fixing his eyes for a few moments thoughtfully upon the ground, raised his head, and, in a grave and dignified tone, recited the following verses :—

Great king, live happy, live exempt from care,
And may each wish a full fruition share !
Your presence gladdens every object here ;
It makes this bubbling spring more cool, more clear ;
Whilst livelier verdure decks the laughing vale,
And richer scents the joyous flowers exhale.

What joy, O friend of the brave, with thee,
To drink and replenish our cups anew !—
May the smile from that lip, ah ! never flee,—
And that lance to its aim be always true !

Pardon this sigh, the voice of secret grief,
That to my love-worn heart gives short relief.
A virgin in these tents,—a cruel one,—
I saw,—and from that hour all rest was gone.
No soothing hope my wretched lot can bring,
Save from the power and kindness of my king.

The deeds of this monarch are bright as the day,
Or as flashes that dart through the haze ;
His presence alone can the tempest allay,
Which discord or faction may raise.
May Fame still o'ershade him, Fate lengthen his span,
And Death ever march in his warriors' van !

Scarcely had Antar finished these verses, when a cloud of dust was perceived, which obscured the horizon, hanging from the sky like a veil. At its foot appeared, like a dark fringe, a band of horse-

men ; the neighing of horses was heard, and soon were distinguished a hundred warriors, whose armour reflected the rays of the sun. At their head was a young man, clad in the rich stuffs of Ionia, and mounted upon a superb Arabian mare.

These warriors halted in order, at a short distance from the spring, and their chief, with a sad and dejected air, approached King Zaer. "Support of the unfortunate," said he, addressing him, "thou who generously received'st me when an orphan, and inspired'st my young soul with the love of glory and of virtue, deign to crown thy benefits by granting me thy powerful protection against a wretch who wishes to annihilate my tribe."

Upon hearing his voice, Prince Malek, son of Zaer, recognized in this youth his foster-brother, Hassan, the son of her who suckled him. He hastened to him, pressed him to his bosom, and inquired the cause of his grief, which he longed to soothe and remove. Antar, a spectator of this scene, stood motionless with impatience to know the cause. Perhaps, reader, you are equally impatient ; to satisfy your desire, we must go a little back.

Zaer, in one of his expeditions, had heretofore captured seven women of the tribe of Mazen, and carried them off, with little Hassan, whose father had been killed in the conflict. Hassan was at the

breast when he arrived, with Sabieh, his mother, in the tribe of Abs. Tamatoor, wife of King Zaer, gave birth to Prince Malek, and Sabieh was employed to nurse the young prince: Malek and Hassan consequently grew up together, and their minds and characters harmonizing, they became strongly attached to each other. Prince Malek being endowed with extraordinary beauty, was remarkable for his attentions to women; he was greatly beloved in his tribe, on account of his good-nature and his great eloquence.

The mother of Hassan, however, still cherished in her heart a desire to revisit her tribe and family. The recollection of a beloved sister, who lived amongst the tribe, incessantly haunted her. Tamatoor, one day, surprised her in tears, and heard her exclaim, with sobs, "no, I shall never again behold the country which gave me birth; I shall be for ever severed from a sister whom I so ardently love, and from every object which attaches me to life." Tamatoor, touched by these affecting sentiments of natural regret, solicited from her husband the enfranchisement of Sabieh. He readily granted it, and added to this gift rich presents, which afforded an ample provision for Sabieh. Hassan, who had by this time grown up and contracted the habits of the children of Abs, had much difficulty

to separate himself from his brethren in arms. He, however, followed his mother, arrived amongst the tribe of Mazen, and by his winning qualities, succeeded in conciliating the esteem and regard of the Mazenites : he moreover displayed his courage and address in various expeditions.

Sabieh was overwhelmed with joy at meeting with a sister so beloved, who had married a wealthy nobleman, named Nujoom. They had a beautiful daughter, who bore the appropriate name of Nahoomeh. The two sisters lived together, and took delight in cultivating the promising qualities of this young damsel.

Hassan could not behold his fair cousin without being struck with her charms. Living in her sweet society, he felt his passion every day increase, though he dared not avow it, when a certain rich and powerful chief, named Aoof, of the tribe of Terjem, came upon a visit to Nujoom. He was received with splendour ; lambs and a camel were slain, and a magnificent entertainment was prepared for him. At the close of the repast, Aoof, emboldened by the fumes of the wine, rose and demanded of Nujoom his daughter Nahoomeh. Nujoom hesitated. Hassan, in a state of agitation, fancying he saw already his beloved Nahoomeh torn from him, lost all restraint ; he rose likewise, and

said, " my rank, my birth, and my parentage give me a preferable claim to the hand of my cousin : I will not suffer Nahoomah to be removed from her tribe, and forced to live amongst strangers."

Aoof, the Terjemite, his eyes sparkling with rage and jealousy, exclaimed : " wretched youth ! you dare compare yourself with an Arab noble ! You advance pretensions equal to mine ! You have the audacity to interfere with me, miserable orphan as you are !" " I am nobler than you," retorted Hassan, " by father and mother. Give thanks to God that you are under this tent, for, if you were not, my scimitar would be closer to your neck than the saliva is to your tongue. If you are proud of your wealth, I tell you that all the property of the Arabs will be mine whenever I wish it. If you boast of your address in managing a steed, or in the use of the lance and scimitar, you have only to try your skill with mine."

Aoof, roused at this to the utmost pitch of fury, seized his arms, darted upon his horse, and sallied forth beyond the tents. Hassan followed him close, attended by all the tribe, eager to witness the combat. Hassan rushed upon his adversary, parried a thrust of the lance which the latter aimed at him, and, closing with Aoof, grasped him at the chest, by the coat of mail, with a vigorous arm, lifted him

out of the saddle, and hurled him at his horse's feet. Hassan was about to sever his rival's head from his body, when Nujoom interposed, observing that the prostrate cavalier had received hospitality in his tent. The indignant lover, therefore, contented himself with cutting the hair off his rival's forehead, tying his hands behind him, and letting him return in this condition to his tribe.

Intelligence of this exploit circulated amongst the Arabs, and no one dared thenceforward appear to demand the hand of Nahoomeh.

Hassan, being constrained by this occurrence to declare his love, waited the decision of Nujoom with inexpressible anxiety. His youth and his want of fortune made him dread a refusal. Plunged in bitter reflections, he began to resign himself up to despair, when a devoted slave assured him that he had heard Nujoom say to his wife, that he should accept his nephew as a son-in-law with pleasure, if he was richer, since he esteemed his bravery and generosity. This news revived the embers of hope in the heart of Hassan; he sought his uncle, arranged with him the amount he was to give, in order to obtain the hand of his beloved, and declared that he was determined to sally forth with his companions in arms, and conquer with his lance the dowry of Nahoomeh.

Before he quitted the tribe, Hassan sent a message to his mistress, requesting her to meet him without the camp. Soon he saw her hasten, with the fleetness and the grace of a timid gazelle. Hassan informed her of his design, and bade her an affectionate adieu. Terrified at the dangers he was about to encounter, for her sake, Nahoomeshed a flood of tears, and exclaimed, "Dearest love, may heaven watch over thee!" Her sobs prevented more. Hassan kissed her forehead, and hastened to rejoin his companions in arms. They marched towards the country of Anadan, traversed Meljem and Gwelan, and their journey was of long duration.

During Hassan's absence, a warrior named Assaf, ranging, upon an occasion, with some of his attendants, over the country which intervened between his own and other tribes, left his party, and came alone to reconnoitre the encampment of the Maze-nites. Whilst he was admiring their rich pasturages, he perceived near a lake a bevy of young maidens, amongst whom was the fair Nahoomesh, who frolicked freely with her companions, emerging from the lake with more lustre and majesty than the star of night in all her plenitude. She smiled, and shewed two rows of pearls intrenched behind lips of coral. Assaf, on beholding her, remained

motionless; he experienced a sentiment he had never felt before. The young damsels perceived him, and remarked that his eyes were fixed upon Nahoomeh. They formed a rampart around her, and, concealing her in the midst of them, cried to Assaf, "have you lost every feeling of decency, that you come here and direct your impudent glances towards women? Surely this is not a mark of bravery or courtesy."

This reproof caused him to retire, but he withdrew slowly, his heart deeply impressed with the image of Nahoomeh. Lord of the tribe of Kahtan, Assaf was remarkable for gigantic stature, and a voice of thunder. He had under his orders a numerous army, which, in a short space of time, impoverished the land on which it encamped, and was forced to seek other pasturage, the inhabitants of which fled at the alarming report of its approach.

When he reached his home, Assaf despatched an ancient female of his tribe, to endeavour to discover who the maiden was whom he had seen; he enjoined the messenger especially to learn whether or not she was free. The skilful emissary soon ascertained that her name was Nahoomeh, the daughter of Nujoom, and that she was not married; with this intelligence she hastened to her master.

Assaf instantly employed one of his relations to proceed to the tribe of Mazen, and announce to Nujoom, that Assaf, having seen his daughter, required him to send her to him with the requisite paraphernalia of a bride, and that he was ready to give whatever dowry Nujoom might think fit to name, telling him to be satisfied that, as soon as he had the honour of being allied to him, he, Nujoom, would have no enemies to fear. He added to this proud message, that if Nahoomeh was not sent willingly, he would take her by force, and would then treat her as a slave; that he would annihilate the tribes of Mazen and Tamides, without sparing widows, orphans, or babes at the breast.

Nujoom returned an answer, by the envoy of Assaf, that his daughter had been promised to his nephew; that he had no further power of disposing of her; that he hoped that Assaf would not conceive any animosity against him on account of this unavoidable refusal; that if, nevertheless, he took any hostile steps, and attempted violence, he knew how to defend himself, and to protect women and children. This reply only served to irritate the passion of Assaf, who vowed that he would get possession of Nahoomeh and treat her as a slave.

At this juncture, Hassan returned with a considerable booty in flocks, camels, and rare and

curious articles. He paid his uncle the stipulated dowry, and set apart five hundred sheep for the nuptial entertainment. Upon learning the menaces of Assaf, Hassan exclaimed, "we must not wait till he comes to attack us; I will go and implore the aid of the powerful King Zaer, who brought me up at his court; I will return with the invincible warriors of Abs and Abnan, and will repel this insolent neighbour far from our lands."

These words calmed the mind of Nujoom, who consented that the nuptials of his nephew and daughter should succeed the entertainment which Hassan wished to give to his friends in order to celebrate his safe and fortunate return. For seven days, the Mazenites gave themselves up to festivity; songs of gaiety and groups of dancers were heard and seen on all sides. On the eighth day, Nahoomeh, adorned with magnificent raiment, was about to be united to her cousin, when some travellers interrupted the ceremony by announcing that Assaf had assembled a considerable force, and was preparing to attack the tribe of Mazen. The travellers added, that Ebn Hassan and Ebn Messad had already arrived at the place of rendezvous, with the tribes of Assed and Jani, and that Aoof, the Terjemite, had joined them, burning with a desire to avenge his affront.

At this news, the elders of the tribe of Mazen assembled in the tent of Nujoom, and represented to him that they were not strong enough to oppose so many enemies ; that they could not even hope, single-handed, to resist Assaf ; and that prudence ought to suggest to him to give his daughter to this redoubtable warrior, rather than expose his relations, his friends, and the whole tribe to certain ruin. Nujoom could not prevail upon himself to sacrifice his daughter ; and Hassan, by dint of tears and entreaties, obtained a delay of ten days, to consider the means of repelling the enemy.

He set off instantly, attended by a hundred horsemen, and proceeded with all speed to King Zaer, whom he found near the spring Zat al Arsad, surrounded by his invincible warriors ; just as we see, in the heavenly arch, the silver star of night environed with a multitude of lesser luminaries.

King Zaer consoled and encouraged young Hassan, promised him the succour he demanded, and directed Prince Malek to go in person and deliver the tribe of Mazen from the oppression of Assaf, placing a thousand of his bravest warriors under his orders. Antar, full of warlike ardour, observed : “ this Assaf is not worthy to expose my prince to so much fatigue ; I alone will accompany this youth and rid him of his enemy, though he

were even the great Khosroes, king of Persia." King Zaer smiled at the speech of Antar; he knew he was capable of executing the boldest undertakings, and he appointed him lieutenant to the prince. Commanding that refreshments should be distributed to Hassan and his companions, the king recommended them to seek repose during the night.

Hassan, however, could not taste the luxury of sleep: he awaited with extreme impatience the appearance of the morning. As soon as it dawned, all the warriors were mounted. Prince Malek disengaged himself with difficulty from the arms of his brothers; Antar embraced his father Shiddad, and breathed a deep sigh at the thought that he was about to separate himself, for some time, from his beloved Ablā.

The warriors of Abs, covered with glittering mail, are mounted upon steeds of pure Arab race; they are armed with the scimeter and the lance. Prince Malek is at the head of the column, on a superb mare, given him by his father: his stirrups are of massive gold, and his helmet is of dazzling brightness. Antar is near him, on his faithful Abjar, of the shape and with the gait of a lion. The indefatigable pedestrian Sheyboob, with quiver on his shoulder, walks at the stirrup of his brother Antar. During the march, Prince Malek endea-

vours to wean the mind of his friend Hassan from the sad reflections upon which it is intent; but finding that the latter could not forget the perils impending over his tribe and his dear Nahoomah, who was menaced with slavery, the prince calls upon Antar, and begs him to *improvise* some warlike air. Antar, full of warlike enthusiasm, bursts forth:—

Oh, how I love the trenchant steel
And the spear-head's glittering point to see!
Death has no ills the brave can feel;
Dastards alone the phantom flee.

Each army advances; the steeds face the lances;
Loud shouts mid the shock send their echoes on high;
A dusty veil shrouds the whole field, like the clouds,
Foreboders of tempests that darken the sky.

Now mingles the fight; coruscations of light
From the flashing of sabres break through the thick gloom;
The gleam of the spears like a comet appears:
Glory, glory to him who dares challenge his doom!

Let the warrior plunge in the midst of the fray,
Let his lance overturn every foe in his way,
With gore let his scimitar's blade be dyed,
But let calmness, not passion, his actions guide.

Midst shame and scorn the coward meets his end,
No friend from insult will his bones defend,
No fair-one melt in sorrow o'er his grave,
For Beauty's tears are due but to the brave.

When I shall fall, one silvery voice will say,
"He was a fearful lion in the fray,
"Who, till he shared the inevitable tomb,
"Guarded from wrong my honour and my home."

Thus sang Antar. "Noble cavalier," said Hassan; "if you equal the most illustrious warriors in valour, you excel them in eloquence." All his companions in arms applauded Antar, and prevailed upon him to repeat his song, in which they joined.

The children of Abs and Mazen continued their march for two days. Antar, who had left his party in order to traverse alone the crest of the mountains, perceived in a valley below two cavaliers engaged in a desperate conflict. He spurred his faithful Abjar, calling out to them to suspend their fury. At the sound of his voice, the combatants separated, and one of them advanced to meet him, his eyes suffused with tears. Antar cheered him, and begged to know the cause of their difference.

"My lord," said the stranger, "we are two brothers; my adversary is the eldest. Our grandfather, a powerful noble, named Amara, the son of Aris, had numerous flocks and herds; amongst them was a young female camel, as swift in its course as the bird of the desert. One day, observing that this camel had not returned with his herds, he interrogated the herdsman, who replied, that the camel having wandered to a distance, he had pursued her for a long time, without being able to

get near her ; that, having taken up a dark-coloured glittering stone, he hurled it at the camel ; that it struck her and pierced her side, and she fell down dead upon the spot. Our grandfather felt much regret at the loss of this animal ; he mounted his horse, and was directed by the herdsman to the spot where he had left her, and there he found the dark stone tinged with blood. Being deeply versed in the nature of things, he discovered that this stone was a fragment of a thunderbolt ; he carried it away, and caused it to be forged into a scimeter by the most celebrated armourer of his time. When the weapon was finished, the workman, matchless in his art, presented it to my grandsire, saying, ‘behold an inestimable weapon, which wants nothing but an arm worthy of wielding it.’ My grandfather, provoked at the insolence of the armourer, took the scimeter out of his hands, and by a blow swifter than lightning, struck off his head with it. Dami (this is the name the scimeter received) had a scabbard of massive gold, and the hilt was enriched with precious stones. My grandsire deposited Dami in his treasury. He died fifteen years after. My father succeeded him, and inherited his scimeter, as well as his other arms. When he found his end approaching, he called me near him, and said to me kindly : ‘ I feel that I

have but a few days to live ; your elder brother is ambitious and unjust ; when I am no more, he will get possession of all my goods. 'Take this weapon,' he added, presenting Dami to me ; 'it will make your fortune. If you carry it to the great Khosroes, king of Persia, or to any other monarch, they will load you with wealth.' I received the present with gratitude, and coming by night, privately, buried it here. A short time after, my father died, and my brother took his place, without admitting me to share in the smallest article of his property. Collecting together the arms, he missed Dami, and accused me of having stolen it. This I at first denied, but he worried me so cruelly, that I was constrained to lead him to the spot where I had buried the scimeter. I sought for it a long time without avail ; having concealed it during the darkness of the night, I was unable to find it again. My brother insisted that I wished to deceive him, and, in spite of my protestations, rushed upon me, sword in hand. I was obliged to defend my life, when your fortunate arrival put a stop to our hateful combat. Do you, my lord, judge between us."

Antar, turning towards the other combatant, asked him why he tyrannized over his brother, and why he refused to allow him to share in the pro-

perty left by their father. Indignant at being thus interrogated by a stranger, the other prepared to reply with his scimeter. Antar perceived his motions; anticipated him, and with a blow of his lance, which was as inevitable as the decree of fate, transpierced his breast, the spear-head glittering from betwixt his shoulders: he fell vomiting torrents of blood, and expired. The young Arab kissed the hand of Antar, and, returning thanks to his liberator, rejoined his tribe.

When he was out of sight, Antar, pleased at having performed this act of justice, had a fancy to repose in the valley for a short time. According to the custom of the Arabs, he struck his lance into the ground before dismounting. Thrice, however, did he strive to make it stick, and thrice the lance, which could pierce the strongest breast-plates, was unable to penetrate the sand. Astonished at this prodigy, Antar leaped from his courser, impatient to discover the cause. He stooped down, and uncovered an enormous scimeter garnished with gold and jewels. Transported with joy, Antar admired the decree of Providence, which had thus placed in his hands the famous Dami. He hastened to his companions in arms, and presented to Prince Malek this weapon worthy of a monarch, relating to him how it came into his power. Malek, after

admiring the sabre, restored it to Antar, saying: "it is but just that the best weapon in the world should fall to the lot of the bravest warrior of his time." His companions in arms congratulated Antar, and continued their route, full of hope from this happy omen.

Having reached a vast plain, overshadowed by lofty plane-trees, the children of Abs were preparing to halt near a limpid rivulet, when they perceived at a distance five hundred horsemen clothed in armour; they advanced towards them. The Absians, with outstretched necks and fixed eyes, halted, anxious to discover whether or not they were enemies. The column, however, advanced majestically; as soon as it was near, a war-cry burst suddenly from both sides. Gaydak, son of Sumbussi, chief of this band, overjoyed at meeting Antar and the Absians, exclaimed, "now I shall, at length, avenge my father; now, at last, shall I wash away my shame!"

Gaydak had, in his tender years, been made an orphan by Antar. When he attained the age of manhood, he displayed so much magnanimity and courage, that his name became renowned amongst the Arabs, and he was adjudged worthy to be the chief of his tribe, as his father had been before him. Gaydak employed the authority thus conceded to

him in exalting the glory and augmenting the happiness of the families under his rule. One Cadaa, jealous of Gaydak's elevation, insidiously called often to his recollection that his father had perished by the hand of Antar, and in the hope of seeing him fall, incited him to defy this hero. Gaydak set out with this bold design, but receiving an invitation from Assaf, he was obliged to return.

Night now approached: the respective forces lit their watch-fires and placed their sentinels. At the earliest dawn, the two armies were ranged in order of battle. Antar darted upon the foe with a cry which made the mountains ring with its echoes. Whirlwinds of dust rise from his horse's feet; he overturns everything that opposes him. Gaydak, observing the disorder which Antar was creating amongst his band, flies to stop the torrent. Antar sees him, and with a single blow of the redoubtable Dami, makes his head fly from his shoulders, and roll some distance in the dust. The horsemen of Gaydak, beholding the fall of their chief, seek safety in flight. The valiant Absians take possession of the enemy's horses and baggage, and continue their march.

They were but a short distance from the tribe of Mazen, when Hassan, impatient to learn what had happened in his absence, asked Prince Malek's per-

mission to precede him, in order to announce to the Mazenites the approach of the warriors of Abs. Malek consented, assuring him that he should soon be with him. Hassan hastened on, and reaching his tribe, found the ground covered with dead bodies. Assaf had made himself master of the camp, after a horrible carnage, and was proceeding towards the mountain of Aban, behind which the women and children had taken refuge. Hassan heard him cry to his companions in arms: "friends, make all slaves you can: plunder and take what you please; I want nothing myself; I abandon every thing to you, save Nahoomeh, the daughter of Nujoom."

Horrorstruck at seeing the condition of his tribe, Hassan rushed into the thickest of the enemy, followed by his party, full of rage. The warriors of Assaf wheeled about, and death triumphed on all sides. Assaf, seeing a young warrior coming furiously towards him, exclaimed, "return whence you came; rush not upon certain death." "If I had arrived sooner," returned Hassan, "you would not have ruined my country. But I bring with me the warriors of Abs, of Adnan, of Fusera, and of Tebian, who will make you repent your violence. I am the husband of her whom you wish to carry off, and I am come to chastise your audacity."

Assaf uttered a furious cry. "Wretch, neither Absians, nor any whom the sun shines upon, can intimidate me." Saying this, he ran at Hassan like a desperate lion, desiring no one to approach: he wished to glut his rage unaided.

The two heroes attacked each other with equal fury. After a long and obstinate combat, Hassan felt his strength decaying, and wished to fly; but Assaf pressed him vigorously, and was about to deal a mortal stroke, when the Absians came up with the rapidity of the falcon. Prince Malek had accelerated his march; arriving soon after Hassan, he had learnt the disastrous plight of the children of Mazen, and flew to their succour. Antar loosened the bridle of the eager Abjar, who made sparks of fire issue beneath his feet, and at the first shock separated the two combatants.

The sight of these warriors restored hope to the hearts of the Mazenites, who returned to the fight, admiring the valour of Antar, who mowed down the chosen warriors of the enemy like ears of corn. The presence of Assaf alone restrained them from flight, and made them brave death. Antar rushed towards him, and pierced him in the right side with his lance: Assaf fell drowned in his own blood. His friends, eager to avenge his death, pressed like a torrent upon Antar, who stood firm, Sheyboof

behind him dealing death with his arrows. The numbers, however, increased, and Antar broke through the crowd with the impetuosity of the north wind.

The children of Abs and of Mazen, inspired with fresh courage, routed their enemies, who, having lost their chief, dispersed on all sides, and abandoned the field of battle. The Mazenites returned to their homes singing the praises of Prince Malek and the intrepid Antar.

REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD INDIAN OFFICER.

I.

Bob. By St. George, I was the first person that entered the breach ; and had I not effected it, I had been slain if I had had a million of lives.

Ed. Know. 'Twas pity you had not ten, your own and a cat's. But was it possible ?

Bob. I assure you (upon my reputation) 'tis true, and yourself shall confess it.

BEN JONSON.

By what absurd prudery is it, that a man who tells his stories with a graphic boldness of description, is sure to be classed with the mere vulgar artificers of fiction ;—that adventures, merely because they are sketched with a flowing, gigantic outline, and reflect a few bright hues of imagination, should be considered as no better than modifications of falsehood ? For my own part, I agree with Madame de Stael, that real life abounds much more with romance than we are disposed to allow.

There seems to me much narrowness in the scepticism with which such extraordinary facts are received,—and worse than narrowness—a Vandalism, a Hunnish barbarism, levelling with its clumsy catapults and battering-rams the towering and aerial architecture, that at once fills the soul of the hearer, disciplines it to lofty conceptions of the vast and sublime, and lifts it above the commonplace regularities of our dull “diurnal sphere,” into an orb swarming with new races of inhabitants, where miracles, so far from being exceptions to the humdrum routine of human affairs, themselves constitute the general rule, to which every-day occurrences and common probabilities are the exceptions.

I shall never forget old Colonel T——, of the Honourable Company’s service, and with how greedy an ear, with what a delight steeped in horror, a curiosity skirted with affright, I used to follow him through his long, tortuous details of the chances that befell him in his protracted military career. I had then but recently arrived in India, and being young, was naturally more interested in the stirring events and revolving vicissitudes related by that most pleasing of auto-biographers—the long windings of his stories that, now obscure and dubious, now suddenly emerging into sunshine, constituted

the greater part of his adventures. Related, as they never failed to be, with the most picturesque fidelity, they kept me in constant vibration between hope and fear ; sometimes making me tremble with a strange inconsistency, lest the tiger, with whom he was in actual conflict for two hours by his watch, one of Barraud's best chronometers, or the gulph of eight hundred feet and a few inches in perpendicular descent, to which he had spurred forwards his horse, in order to get at a detachment of the enemy by a shorter cut, should swallow him up, and snap asunder the yarn of his narrative. I mention this merely to shew the power of the historian ; for it is what I actually felt even whilst I saw and heard him.

This extraordinary being had lived a life of sieges. The trenches, the "imminent deadly breach," the scarp and counterscarp, were the cradles that rocked his early love of military achievements :—the smoke of field-pieces, the fumes of bursting stink-pots, and tumbrils taking fire—the miasma of ditches dense with alligators, many of whom, dying with affright from the turmoil and uproar of the same, rendered the air still more putrid—all this was the atmosphere to which his organs were most familiar. In every respect, he seemed a man destined to the strange out-of-the-way

occurrences, that cut so remarkable a figure in the morsels of biography with which he was accustomed to treat us. He lived in a good house, when I first knew him, in the neighbourhood of Chepauk, and was very hospitable, except in the article of wine; his claret and Madeira being of second-rate qualities; but his guests forgot that his wines were sour, whilst they listened to his adventures.

Colonel T——, in figure, was much below the ordinary stature, and though by no means slender, there was in his corpulence that which contradicted the notion of his being fat. The most remarkable; for it was the most engrossing, part of that figure, was his head, which, being enormously disproportioned to the rest of his person, gave him the shape of a turbot, of which the rhomboid was not interrupted by any thing resembling a neck; so that hardly any portion of his form stood out from the general context of the body, if I may be permitted such an expression. On the projecting promontory of a nose, to which bivouacking in the dry land-winds of the night, or reposing with his face upwards under a vertical sun in the day, had imparted a portentous redness, glared a huge carbuncle, around which, like the planets in a motionless orrery, were ranged, as if doing it homage, all the minor pimples of his countenance;

or rather, like the sheristadars, duftadars, jemadars, and chubdars, ranged round the nabob of Oude seated in his durbar. His eyes were small and greyish, and pierced apparently in an after-thought, nature having overlooked them in her original design: but they seemed to gleam with wonder at his escapes by flood and field, as they were reminded of the ten thousand shapes in which danger and death had flitted before them.

Such was my worthy friend Colonel T —, of the Honourable Company's service; and with so pleasing a fascination did his strange adventures beguile my attention, that I abjured the sight of the cold-blooded sceptics, male or female, who turned their noses up at his details, or threw their faces into affected distortions, as if there was something too hard to swallow, or hoisted on their idiotic features the customary signals, by which persons of no imagination denote their incredulity.

The colonel, after the manner of many other old officers in the Company's service, so long as he was in command, never failed at the conclusion of an awakening incident, to call in the redundant testimony of his aide-de-camp: a most superfluous precaution, as I felt it to be; for his recitals, even when they snatched a grace or two beyond the reach of

truth, were so entertaining, that even if they had not been true, they at least ought to have been so. Still, however, from a laudable wish to make out the case, as the lawyers say, he did occasionally make the appeal, which, being always affirmatively answered, became “confirmation strong as Holy Writ.”

Never, then, was I more displeased with any living creature, than I was with that very aide-de-camp, who, for nearly two years, had gone on indorsing in blank so many of the colonel’s stories, one after the other, but who, a short time after the colonel had resigned his command, being appealed to as usual,—after a pretty long description of a most disastrous march, and a most miraculous redemption of sixteen field-pieces that, in the heat of a pursuit, had stuck fast in a ravine upon the Pullitacherry ghauts, and were instantly surrounded by a stout body of Tippoo’s horse,—actually deserted his commanding officer at his utmost need, by refusing to vouch for the transaction. “It seems an extraordinary escape,” said the simple-hearted colonel, as he finished his relation, “but it’s quite true—and Captain Simmer—there—was my aide-de-camp at the time, and will tell you the same. Captain Simmer, you remember it well, don’t you?—”

“I beg pardon, colonel,” replied the captain; “I am not your aide-de-camp *now*, and don’t recollect a word about it.” As if the coxcomb,—who, whilst he was eating the colonel’s rice, and doing the honours of his board, had become the subscribing witness to matters much more surprising,—might not, out of pure good-nature, have continued to render him the same trifling service. In truth, I found afterwards no reason to regret the circumstance; for, from this time, my friend the Colonel went on much the better from having no aide-de-camp to appeal to. He had a wider range of memory to wander over; and having nothing to fear from being deserted by his witness at a pinch, condescended no more to prop up his relations by such contemptible buttresses, but on the contrary reared them into the air with a towering magnificence of structure, that frowned like the bastions of a hill-fort on the puny intellects that doubted or distrusted him. It was wonderful, the incubus of which the mutinous reply of Captain Simmer relieved him; for it may be as well to observe that Captain Simmer was a King’s officer, and naturally disposed to an envious credulity of the achievements of the Company’s army. My friend was now, therefore, infinitely more at his ease;—a Cæsar without a Marc Antony to rebuke

him ; or rather like the horse in Homer, unyoked from the chariot, and gambolling and frisking over fresh pastures, without check or restraint.

And it has always struck me, if at any time I have used the privilege of an old Indian,—as I have occasionally done at the tea-table of a maiden aunt, who sometimes invited a small and select set to hear what I had to tell of that miraculous country, and when I have begun with some modest incident, fabulous indeed with regard to the rest of the earth, but natural and probable in India, it seemed to put the tea-cups and saucers into commotion, as if a thunder-cloud had burst on them ;—I repeat, it has always struck me, as the height of absurdity, to apply the rule and compass of common facts to a story of which the scene is laid there. Yet I related only matters of the stalest notoriety ; of persons, for instance, who swallowed swords ; of cobra di capellas that danced waltzes and quadrilles ; and I told her that in India there were millions of human beings, who never in their lives drank any thing stronger than water. She received them all indeed politely, yet with an incredulous stare ; but as to the water-drinkers, she frankly declared, it could not be true—it was impossible ; there might be a few, but so many fools could never exist together in the same country and at the same

time. Probably she was the more sceptical, as she loved from her heart an occasional glass of *eau de vie*, provided it was of a good quality.

For India, perhaps Asia in general, is the seat of the most stupendous images and gigantic associations, that can fill the mind. It has been in all ages the theatre of what is vast or surprising in the history of the species; the cradle in which its infancy was nursed, and a country so teeming with life and population, that northern Europe, which has been called the *officina gentium*, is a mere costermonger's stall in the comparison. Every thing in India refuses to accommodate itself to the narrowness of European conceptions. The illimitable antiquity of its institutions; the faint and shadowy lines in which its history fades into its mythology; the mystic divisions of caste, like rivers coeval with the Indus and the Ganges, and flowing like them for ever apart; the awful and giddy pile of its chronology, hiding its head in the darkest mists of time; the beasts of prey, at whose roar the primæval forests tremble; elephants, on whose backs battalions ride to combat; its serpents of immeasurable coil; its banian trees, each of them a forest;—all present to us the wildest exaggerations of nature, and discourse of the great and the infinite in a language intelligible to man. This taste for the

vast and unbounded is better cultivated in India than any other part of the world, and I advise those who have a dull and uninteresting method of telling their facts, to travel thither and improve it.

For myself, I perceived the taste ripening within me, in the same ratio as I acquired the habit of believing the improbable, or rather the *αναριθμον*, as the Greeks call it, of the old colonel's adventures. Nothing is so dull in general as military operations; but his campaigns were fruitful of the wildest combinations of fortune, and even in times of peace, his life abounded with episodes, of a less stirring character indeed, but equally strange and interesting.

One evening, a small party of us were sitting at his hospitable table. The bottle went languidly round, for, to speak the truth, his claret was unusually acrid, and the Madeira yielded no refuge, for if possible it was worse. But he soon drew our attention from so insignificant a circumstance, and began thus:—

“ A mutiny broke out amongst the sepoy's of a battalion I commanded at Trichinopoly,—the 2d battalion of the 5th regiment of Native Infantry.” These particulars he never neglected,—they were fascines and gabions, as it were, to protect the cavities of his story. “ There were few officers on duty with us, except three lieutenants, an ensign

or two, and Captain Fireworker Fondlepan, commanding a small corps of artillery at the same station. What was to be done? It was a critical exigency, and no time was to be lost. I had no one to consult with, for my juniors were mere boys, and when the time for decisive action came, I found Captain Fireworker Fondlepan, who was a great epicure, standing over his mulligatawney, which was then on the fire. To have got him away from his stewpan would have been as hopeless as to remove a projector from his pots at the moment of projection. I was determined, however, to quell the mutiny at the hazard of my life. The chief cause of the discontent was a strong suspicion that the English were bent upon extirpating the Hindoo religion and establishing their own in its stead: I resolved, therefore, to remove the suspicion, taking it for granted that the sepoys, as soon as that was done, would return to their duty.

“ Now, as good luck would have it, that very day was the grand festival of Jaggernaut, the day on which the immense car of the god is wheeled about, and thousands of his devotees rush to throw themselves down before it for the honour of being crushed to atoms as it passes over them. Now I well knew that what had principally given birth to the dissatisfaction of the sepoys was the sneering

irreverent way in which English officers were accustomed to speak of that ceremony, calling those, who tried all they could to be killed on that occasion, so many fools and asses for their pains.

“What do you think, I did? You will swear it is incredible—but it is all true, and you may swear till you are black in your faces.

“Extraordinary evils require extraordinary remedies. I heard the rumbling of the dreadful chariot, and the roar and shouts of the myriads that thronged around it. I was prepared: for I marched up towards it at the head of my regiment, colours flying, drums beating. There was something truly terrific in the noise of that mighty machine. It was like mount Atlas moving upon wheels. At length it approached the place where I stood.

“‘Make way!’ said I, in four several languages, Hindostanee, Canarese, Tamul, Malayalum; ‘make way! I will shew you all, that, though the English are attached to their own faith, they respect yours also, and venerate its mysteries.’

“So saying, I threw myself beneath the fore-wheel on the left side of the ponderous engine. At the same instant, loud murmurs of applause sounded in my ears like the rushing of many

waters. It was a terrible moment. The chariot, indeed, did not do me much injury, for, luckily, my gorget gave way at the instant the forewheel passed over me, and by slipping on one side, turned the wheel also into another direction;—but the myriads of blockheads that ran over me, each eager to be crushed to death in honour of the god, were too much for endurance. Never can I forget the innumerable hoofs, some bare, some sandaled, that kneaded me that morning almost into clay.

“ You will ask what supported me on this trying occasion?—The gratifying consciousness, that I was saving the Company’s dominions; for if that mutiny had not been quelled, there would have been a general insurrection of the native troops through the whole peninsula. Besides, what is life to a brave man? I had eaten the Company’s salt from my youth upwards. How then could I hesitate? It is inconceivable how these feelings kept up my spirits, whilst I lay motionless beneath the immense avalanches of human flesh, that came tumbling in succession over me. But—you would not think it—well, think as you like, but it is true, every word of it,—I derived considerable encouragement from a circumstance, that seems a trifling one:—it was, however, a good omen, and I made the most of it.

“Every body knows the veneration cherished by the Hindoos for their monkeys. They lead a life of ease and indolence amongst the trees that surround the great pagoda of Trichinopoly, and to injure or destroy them is an inexpressible profanation. The spot I occupied, whilst my carcase was officiating as a trottoir to so many thousands of human beings, faced that celebrated pagoda, on the south-west angle. I omitted telling you that I had taken especial caution to protect my face, as well as I could, by keeping my right elbow over it, but in a position that enabled me to see from under it almost every thing that was going on. Amongst other things, I noticed in particular a brahminy monkey, who, from one of the projecting friezes of the temple, was looking down upon the bustling scene below, perhaps all the while laughing at it in his sleeve. He was in all respects an interesting personage, and calculated to inspire the respect due to age and experience. His long grey beard descended almost to his middle, and his cheeks were channelled as if by deep thought and meditation. .

“Now it may seem odd,—but I’ll be hanged, for all that, if it is not true, every word of it,—whenever I caught a glimpse of his countenance, it was lighted up with a peculiar smile of complacency; nay, he nodded to me with a look of appro-

bation it was impossible to misinterpret. It seemed to tell me to be of good heart,—and once, as I was endeavouring to shift myself a little on one side, he frowned when he saw what I was doing, and chattered loudly, as if to desire me to lie still. Luckily, I took his hint. Had I changed my position, I should have been trodden into powder, and there would have been no memorial of me but what a shovel might have swept up in the evening.”

When the colonel had concluded his story, we all felt that he was drawing at a most prodigious rate on our credulity. I was unwilling, however, to express a single doubt, for I had arrived in India with a strong impression, that it was the theatre of extraordinary occurrences. The rest of the company consisted of two lieutenants, an ensign, and a cadet, new to the service, and they, not feeling quite assured that to express disbelief of a superior officer's stories would not bring them within the Articles of War, stared to the utmost stretch of their eyes, and said nothing.

It was plain that he perceived these symptoms of doubt. “Ah,” said he, “you don't believe that I could have escaped death from the pressure of so many people. And it is extraordinary. But don't be in a hurry, and you'll find nothing incredible in it.

“ I have always found an advantage,” he continued, “ in considering things philosophically. And what is philosophy but the application of those general rules of human action, which, being stored up by experience, are brought into use by accident or occasion? Often had I reflected on the superstitions of Hindostan. I knew that they supplied artificial maxims of conduct that ran counter to the genuine impulses of humanity. But I said to myself—granted, that there will be *many individuals* who, in the delirium of a false religion, will voluntarily rush upon martyrdom; yet it is contrary to sound philosophy, that *thousands* should concur, at the same moment, in one act of suicide.

“ I always debate, however, such questions with an impartial attention to all that can be said on both sides;—and the European crusades of the tenth and eleventh centuries, when the pillars of the earth trembled under the feet of millions who never returned, stared my hypothesis in the face. ‘ Pshaw!’ said I, ‘ that goes for nothing. Had they been all sure of perishing, there would have been no crusaders.’ So I drew this conclusion—that, though it was considered by the Hindoos as highly meritorious to throw themselves beneath the chariot of Jaggernaut, yet they all calculated upon escaping destruction.

“ There was a devilish clever fellow of a pundit, who often visited me. He was ripely learned in the religion of his country, and while he conformed outwardly to its rites, he had too much acuteness not to see through its impostures. I took care, therefore, before I made up my mind to this hazardous experiment, to consult him confidentially upon it.

“ ‘ Ramochund Roy,’ said I, ‘ to-day is the holy procession of Jaggernaut.’—‘ It is,’ said he, with a graceful salaam. ‘ And thousands upon thousands will strive for the privilege of being crushed to death beneath the chariot.’—‘ Undoubtedly,’ he replied, gravely; ‘ they will thus get into paradise three millions of years before they would arrive there in the ordinary course of things. Besides that, they are by this means sure, in the next stage of their being, not to inhabit the bodies of obscene animals or beasts of prey, which to a Hindoo is very unpleasant.’

“ ‘ These are strong inducements,’ I said. ‘ But my friend, Ramochund Roy, of those who throw themselves beneath the car, a few only can be killed. And are all the disappointed candidates for the same honour, who display an equal spirit of devotion and courage, to be exempted from the high rewards you speak of?’ He paused—eyed

me with a glance that half said, ‘master has found out the secret,’—and said—‘No. That makes no difference. Vishnu looks on actual death and the willingness to die, in his service, with equal approbation; and hence it is so many escape destruction.’ As he said this, I observed a smile on his lips.

“‘How is that?’ said I to Ramochund Roy, as if I had caught him. But he could not escape the horns of my dilemma. So he gave it up;—and looking round to see that no one was within hearing, unfolded a shawl that girded his loins, and drew from its folds something like a breast-plate, of an elastic substance resembling India rubber, but hard as adamant, and so light and portable, that it could easily be concealed under the exterior of the dress.

“It was the thing I wished for. I then revealed the experiment I contemplated ‘to save his Mother:’ for the Hindoos in English pay look upon the Company as their mamma. He assisted me in putting on the thorax, which he said was a secret known only to the brahmins, and assured me that, under its protection, the whole population of India might pass over me without injury. ‘But halloa,’ said I—for the chariot was fast approaching—‘this will protect one part only of my person—other parts more vulnerable’—‘Don’t be alarmed,’ he said, ‘it will stretch at the rate of one-quarter of

an inch for every hundredth person that goes over you, till it completely covers you.' ”

Here the colonel looked at us, to observe whether our incredulity was cured. We testified our unanimous belief. “ But,” said I, “ seeing what an unspeakable benefit you have rendered your country, you are of course in the enjoyment of a splendid pension for your gallantry in that astonishing affair ? ” — “ Not at all,” he replied. “ True, I saved the British empire in India, and prevented the cutting of ten thousand British throats ; counting ladies and all, we may say fifteen thousand. What of that ? I had no interest at the presidency, or, as Major O’Neal of our regiment used to say, all the interest I had there was against me. For, the last time I was at Madras, whilst I was one morning paying my respects to the governor, his lady coming suddenly into the room, I moved somewhat too hastily towards her, and trod upon her ladyship’s foot. Now I have it from good authority, that her ladyship the governess never forgot it : so I was at that time in bad odour at head-quarters. Yet they could not help taking some notice of my having saved India ; so they voted me forty rupees a month in addition to my pay : scarcely half a pice for every foot that trod upon me in their service.

“But what will you think,” continued the colonel, “when you hear that, as soon as it got wind in England that I had received a pension for what I did on that occasion, such a hubbub ensued, that a Court of Proprietors was instantly summoned, at which one of their orators made a long speech, enlarging upon the cruelty of the suttee, for the first hour or two; then upon the horrid abominations of Jaggernaut, accusing the Directors point blank of conniving at, because they had imposed a heavy tax upon, the ceremony. At last he came to me and my bit of a pension.

“‘Nay more,’ said he: ‘a British officer of great talents and high rank, and commanding at the station in sight of the pagoda whence the car proceeds on its infernal round,—I mean Colonel T—; this officer, because forsooth a mutiny had broke out among the native troops, on the alleged ground that the English were meditating the subversion of the Hindoo religion;—this officer, I repeat, instead of exerting his influence, as became him, to shew them the folly and heathenism of their execrable rites, gave them his express sanction, by casting himself under the wheels of the chariot. But it is said, he saved our Indian empire. What of that? An empire is dearly bought at the price of an acquiescence in superstitions that disgrace our na-

ture. I go further: for this Colonel T——, who ought to have been dismissed the service, has been rewarded out of the Company's treasury by a prodigal grant specifically for that day's exploit.' The orator, after speaking five hours by the Company's clock, sat down; but (such is the power of eloquence over the body to which he belonged) succeeded in carrying a vote of censure against the Directors and the Madras government. The consequence was, that, in their next despatches, there was a paragraph roundly rating the local government for their misapplication of the public treasure, and stopping my forty rupees a month for ever."

We expressed our thanks for the interesting adventures which our friend related to us, and our palanquins being at the door, took our leave."

"Pooh," said he, "this is nothing. Promise to dine with me next Sunday, and you shall hear something more surprising." We did not require much persuasion, and gave our promises without hesitation.

REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD INDIAN OFFICER.

II.

WHEN we next met at the hospitable table of our friend, the colonel, we found him not a little depressed ; and began to be apprehensive that the state of his spirits would be inauspicious to the usual flow of his after-dinner narrations. The fact is, he had dined a day or two before with a member of council, at whose table he met two or three of those coxcombs, who glory in dissipating the enchantment of an Anglo-Asiatic adventure, by finding the cracks and flaws of a story, and hunting out petty discrepancies and trivial incongruities : like the critics, who turn up their noses at Shakspeare, when he disdains to be fettered with the shabby unities of time and place. These blockheads, it seems, were young civilians, fresh from the matter-of-fact land of their birth, whose minds a long residence in India had not yet enlarged to the dimensions of the various prodigies, which are of almost

daily occurrence in that country. Accordingly, after the colonel had treated them with one of the most amusing incidents he could pick out from his wallet, which, I need not say, was always well stuffed with singular and awakening facts, they shrugged their shoulders, tossed their heads, and exhibited the most obtrusive symbols of that unpolished incredulity, which had justly given him so much offence.

In the party assembled at the colonel's table, there chanced to be a barrister of the Supreme Court, a well-informed man and polished in his manners, who endeavoured, by giving a pleasing turn to the conversation, to bring our good friend back to his wonted track of narrative, from which the impertinence he had lately experienced had nearly turned him aside. "It seems to me," said the barrister, "the most unequivocal symptom of a narrow intellect, to throw discredit upon any specific occurrence, merely because it rises above the level of every-day experience; nor is any thing more provoking than the foolish exclamations, on such occasions—how improbable! how incredible! as if 'improbable' and 'incredible' were convertible words; whereas that which seems improbable is not incredible, and that which seems incredible is by

no means improbable. It is a mere logomachy, considered apart from false associations.

“And do imagine, if you can, a mode of existence from which every thing improbable and incredible is excluded. What, in such a state of things, would become of the most active undying principle of our being,—curiosity? Gone; gasping for breath like the mouse in the philosopher’s air-pump, when the receiver is exhausted. Figure to yourselves the dead, cheerless void, the torpid, exanimate stupidity of such a world! The bare imagination of it comes over one with a sensation like that we experienced during the hot nights we have had lately;—an atmosphere so heavy, stagnant, and motionless, that it seemed as if the winds of heaven had sighed away their last breath.

“I go further. Blot out what you call the incredible and the improbable from real history; prune your ancient or modern records of every shoot and excrescence that strays beyond what you can easily believe or readily admit; what a miserable balance-sheet would the history of the world appear! what a paltry sum of insignificant items, when all the dignity of its agents, all that is dramatic in its transitions, or stirring and ennobling in its lessons, is struck out! I am not speaking of mere

fables," continued the barrister; "of roaring, rampant prodigies,—the '*quicquid Græcia mendax*;' nay, I will give you up Mount Athos and the fleet that sailed through it,—though I believe Herodotus to be most shamefully slandered in this respect:—but, in the name of authentic history, I ask, what is to become of the whole catalogue of daring adventurers, rank and file,

From Macedonia's madman to the Swede;

in a word, all the romance of history, which is the most credible part of it after all—the Corinthian capitals that crown it, the immortal friezes that stand out in such exquisite relief from its surface?

"And on the existing world, this most remorseless ostracism of incredible facts would be still more deadening in its effects than on the retrospective. You must have a new language. Every sentence must be decimated of its epithets; and as for the delightful gabble of the sex, when every adjective that glides from their lips is mulcted of its superlative, and every phrase implying intensity of feeling or thought is forbidden them—what a death-blow, I say, to that interesting gossip, which so well becomes them when they play the part of historians; those graceful tendrils of imagery and

fancy, that twine round our hearts as we listen to their narrations ! One sickens at the thought.

“ But I go still further. I assert that the region of fact, strict literal fact, is commensurate with that of romance. Their territories are so curiously indented into each other that it is scarcely practicable to discriminate their exact boundaries. Examine the facts which constitute the daily questions that arise in courts of law. Facts that are enough to make you turn pale with astonishment, and to keep you so for the rest of your natural life, revolve there in a ceaseless circle ; miracles are there solemnly attested beyond the reach of scepticism ; the wildest anomalies are brought into juxta-position—the most jarring contradictions reconciled. A court of law is a stage, as it were, on which Fate herself is a mountebank, displaying all sorts of buffooneries to amuse, all sorts of juggling to perplex us ;—a carnival of the strangest follies and the most incredible crimes. Are you conversant with that most amusing of all French books—the *Causes Célèbres* ? It is a collection of adjudged cases in the old provincial courts of France, carried by appeal to the provincial parliaments, sifted, analyzed, debated by minds trained to doubt, magnifying hairs into stone-walls, turning over every thing, first on one

side, then on the other, with the keen inquisition of a watchmaker examining the wheels of a chronometer.

“And my own little experience in the Supreme Court of this presidency would be enough to furnish cases of so extraordinary a kind, involving delicate questions of testimony,—that testimony hanging together by so curious a contexture—so whimsical a joinery—you would suppose they had been strung together expressly for the Minerva press. Allow me to say, moreover, that nature is a more skilful artist than imagination. She pieces her work without seam or suture; she never overreaches herself as fiction is apt to do, by stretching her arm too far. All, in her operations, is striking without absurdity, miraculous without exaggeration. I would, therefore, exhort the puppies, who laugh at the colonel’s surprising adventures, merely because they transcend the circle of their own limited conceptions, to ponder a little upon some matters of fact, that will give their credulity a much rougher exercise; yet, resting upon the assured testimony of living witnesses, and upon circumstances which cannot err. And, perhaps, you will permit me to mention one, the first that comes into my recollection.

“It was one of the earliest briefs I ever held,” said the barrister. “The cause was tried before

three clever judges, and it made each particular hair of their heads so to bestir itself, as to endanger the balance of their law-wigs. Indeed, the junior judge had just arrived from England with a new wig; but unfortunately it had feasted a convocation of cock-roaches on the voyage, and there was a wide aperture on each side, through which his ears projected; and it was amusing to observe them becoming every minute more and more erect as the details of the case increased in interest.

“James Murdoch and William Nichol, privates in the Madras European regiment, were indicted for the murder of one Hawley, a serjeant in that regiment. The cantonments of Arcot, where the murder was committed, consist, as the colonel well knows, of a line of neat bungalows for the officers, at some distance from the barracks. Beyond the lines, and much behind the barracks, there are one or two huts, at a straggling space from each other, where arrack, toddy, and other poisons, are licensed to be vended, the sum paid for the license going into some pocket ready to receive it, as a perquisite for winking at the abuse. One evening, a party had stolen out, after gun-fire, to one of those dens of drunkenness, kept by a man and woman, neither of them bearing the best of characters. Their names were Alexander and Mary Britton. Their

three guests, Murdoch, Nichol, and Serjeant Hawley, becoming by degrees maddened with a liquor remarkable for producing that effect without the intermediate one of inebriation, a quarrel took place, according to the statement of Britton and his wife, between the two privates and the serjeant, and afterwards an affray, which terminated in bloodshed; Hawley having fallen, in consequence of severe blows given him by Murdoch and Nichol, one of whom mortally wounded him with a bayonet.

“Such a scene, though accompanied with the noisy wrangling which is the usual prelude to blows, was too distant from the cantonments to attract observation. A sentinel, indeed, heard something like a shriek, but as the festivities of the place were generally drunken ones, noises above the ordinary pitch were neither unusual nor appalling circumstances. The serjeant was, of course, missed, and inquiries made for him in every direction.

“Before, however, any suspicions were directed to the hut, Britton and his wife appeared before the commanding officer, to whom they made the following statement. They were well acquainted with Hawley, who frequently came to their *boutique*, as well as with the two privates. All three came there on the preceding night, and after drinking

rather freely, a violent dispute took place between Nichol and Hawley, arising from some jealous feelings entertained by the former as to certain attentions the serjeant was supposed to have paid his wife. Murdoch entered into the quarrel, having been aggrieved by some strokes of a rattan the serjeant had given him upon parade. In a short time after the commencement of the dispute, the two privates rushed upon Hawley, and Nichol, seizing a bayonet which had fallen on the ground in the scuffle, inflicted a mortal wound upon the serjeant, who died immediately, without a groan.

“Being asked, why they made no effort to separate them during the struggle, or to give the alarm at the barracks, they declared they had made the strongest efforts with that intent, but that the two men being muscular and strong, and they themselves in a weak state of health, they were easily overpowered, and were subsequently afraid to leave the hut, inasmuch as Nichol, having armed himself with a horse-pistol loaded with slugs, which hung up in the hut as a protection from the Looties (a wandering tribe, some of whom constantly hovered about Arcot and the adjacent places), threatened them with instant death if they attempted to stir, and, moreover, forced them by intimidation to assist Murdoch in removing the body of the de-

ceased to a small enclosure at the back of the hut, where they found a piece of tent-cloth with which they covered it. They then went away, with the most horrid imprecations, and menacing them with immediatedestruction if they dared to leave the hut ; telling them also they would return in a short time to bury the body. On this information, Murdoch and Nichol were ordered to the guard-room, and the commandant, with the magistrate of the district, who happened to be then on a visit within the cantonment, proceeded back to the hut with the man and his wife.

“ On entering it, they observed blood upon the floor, but much of it appeared to have been absorbed during the night ; and proceeding to the back of the hut, where the witnesses described the body to have been left beneath a covering of tent-cloth, they lifted up the cloth, but the body was not under it. They looked minutely about the premises, but could not discover it. The cloth, indeed, was bloody in many places ; but the surgeon, who took a part in the investigation, expressed surprise that there was no appearance of coagulated blood, which usually follows from a stab inflicted by a sharp instrument. But the most striking circumstance was the absence of the body itself. The witnesses testified surprise at this incident.

Only one mode of accounting for it presented itself—that of the deceased having been carried off by the Looties, for the sake of his dress or any valuable article he might have upon his person; and this was the more probable, as the serjeant had a gold watch in his pocket at the time of the scuffle, and nothing of the kind had been found upon either of the prisoners. Being asked, why they did not secure his watch after his death, they replied that, in their alarm and distraction, they had not taken the precaution. In answer to a question, why they gave information at so late an hour, they said they were afraid of being killed by the prisoners, and dared not leave the place till eight o'clock the next morning.

“ There were some singular things observable in their statements, but they adhered to them, at least in their general outline, with little or no variation. On the other hand, from the first to the last, Murdoch and Nichol denied the crime imputed to them. They acknowledged, indeed, that feeling anxious to get the serjeant out of the hut, knowing he had valuable property on his person, a gold watch in his fob, and a bag of one hundred pagodas concealed in his dress, of which he had boasted in the course of the evening, they endeavoured to pull him forcibly away; but, having obstinately resisted for some

time, he sunk down at last in a drunken stupor, in which state they left him to the care of the man and woman. They supposed it to have been about ten o'clock when they left the hut and returned to the barracks.

“ It was a nice point:—for, the *corpus delicti* not being proved, it did not unequivocally appear that a murder had been committed. This defect, however, was supplied by the positive assertion of Britton and his wife, that they had seen the serjeant die, and that when the body was removed, life was quite extinct. The hypothesis, therefore, of its abstraction by the Looties, was acquiesced in, as being the least improbable.

“ The death of the serjeant, by the hands of Nichol and Murdoch, being thus sworn to, the prisoners were sent under a guard to Madras, to take their trial before the Supreme Court. They arrived there two days only before the sessions; but, prior to their final commitment to the gaol, they were confined, under the same guard which had brought them to the presidency, in a small arched room, beneath the ramparts of Fort St. George, which was occasionally used as a Company's go-down. A strongly-barred window towards the sea was the only opening by which it was ventilated. The nights being sultry, the prisoners placed them-

selves as near the window as they could. Hence, in addition to the guard at the door opening into the fort-square, another had been stationed under the window looking to the sea. The sentinel, who did duty there, paced backwards and forwards on a kind of terrace formed by the stones piled up as a breakwater, to protect the fort from the incursions of the sea, which for many years had gained considerably upon it.

“ It was about the hour of midnight ; the same corporal who had brought the prisoners to Madras was on duty below the window of the room in which the prisoners were confined. He was nearly twenty feet beneath that window. The moon shone bright, but mistily. The corporal was much respected by his officers for steadiness and sobriety, and his courage had been tried on too many occasions to be questioned. Well ;—about twelve o’clock—indeed, St. Mary’s clock had not quite finished striking ; it was an old weather-beaten storm-cradled clock, and always took time to tell its story,—in this instance, it struck at longer intervals than usual, for I myself slept only three or four yards from it that night ;—but the clock had not quite finished, when Corporal Hutchinson distinctly perceived a darkish body of vapour, which gradually increased in size, advancing through the

surf. Suddenly, the vapour disappeared, and within two muskets' length marched Serjeant Hawley, in the regimentals,—red, with yellow facings,—of the Madras European regiment. His head was bandaged, and the cloth which bound it bloody; it was apparently yet bleeding. The serjeant slowly advanced towards the sentinel.

“ The corporal (as he told the story) felt at first a little nervous, it being a thing he had been never used to; but, knowing that no evil spirit could harm a good Christian, he tried to recollect the Lord's Prayer, but failing in that, succeeded in repeating a part of the Creed, when the serjeant came still closer to him, and told him not to be alarmed.

“ ‘ And can it be you, Serjeant Hawley?’ demanded the corporal.

“ ‘ The same,’ answered the serjeant. ‘ I belong to your own company, George Hutchinson.’

“ ‘ You did so,’ said the other. ‘ But what brings you back from the dead? And did these poor lads murder you?’

“ ‘ That's the business I am come about,’ said the serjeant. ‘ The lads are as innocent as babes unborn. The man and woman belonging to the hut murdered me half an hour after the poor fellows had gone home to their barracks. They then

robbed me of my watch, and hid it in the winch-pillow of their cot, where I have no doubt it is now. They could not get at my pagodas, which were quilted in my cape; so I nabbed them there,' said he, with the same knowing wink (according to the corporal's story) he used to make when he was living.

" ' But are you come from the dead ?' asked the corporal.

" ' Ask me no questions about that, George Hutchinson,' rejoined the serjeant. ' Only mind this,—that Jem Murdoch and Bill Nichol are innocent. Lose no time, and get the saddle put upon the right horse.' So saying, Serjeant Hawley marched slowly away towards the beach. A black vapour again rose over the surf, but he was visible no longer.

" ' This is a pretty kettle of fish,' said the corporal; but although the two prisoners were at the window, and perhaps saw and heard all that passed, he knew his duty, when on guard, too well to exchange a word with either of them. Nor did he mention a syllable of what had happened till he reported it to the town-major the following morning.

" ' How strange !' said the town-major.

" ' It's quite true, for all that,' said Corporal Hutchinson.

“ ‘ But why’, said the town-major, ‘ why did you not detain him as a deserter ?’

“ ‘ Detain a ghost for deserting !’ exclaimed the corporal. ‘ No, that can never be. It can’t be so in the Articles of War, your honour.’

“ It was of no use debating the point with the corporal, who, backed by the Articles of War, would not flinch from his argument. It is quite clear, then, thought the town-major, that the fellow, perhaps half asleep and half awake, saw and heard something that seemed to bear the semblance of the serjeant. Satisfied with his own hypothesis, the town-major thought no more about the matter.

“ Early on the same morning, the prisoners were visited by a soldier, who carried them their breakfasts. He found them in the greatest consternation, and they positively assured him they had seen Hawley that night distinctly, and heard him conversing with the corporal, though by reason of the height of the window above the terrace, and the roaring of the surf, they could hear only the sound of voices, but could not distinguish what they talked about. The same story they repeated to the magistrates, by whom they were committed for trial ; to the constable who conducted them to the prison in the Black Town ; and to the gaoler, old Tom Eglan, when they arrived there. In the mean-

while, the bill of indictment was sent before the grand jury, and, on the oaths of Britton and his wife, returned ‘a true bill ;’ those witnesses having adhered steadily to their original statement.

“ The matter was much discussed, and, though the ghost-story was but slightly credited, some degree of sympathy began to be felt for the prisoners, especially as the man and woman were persons of notoriously bad characters. A small subscription having been set on foot to enable them to employ counsel, an attorney was sent into the prison to take down the heads of their defence. The men told him the same story they had told all along ;—that, observing Serjeant Hawley to be in a stupified state from drinking, and knowing he had property about him, they endeavoured to get him home ; but finding him intractable, had left him in the care of Britton and his wife. They further assured him, with a solemnity of manner, attesting at least the sincerity of their belief, that they had seen the serjeant with his head bandaged, but in other respects looking as usual ; that they had neither seen nor conversed with Corporal Hutchinson on the subject, and that the reason of their watching so late at the window was the extreme closeness of the apartment in which they were shut up, and the musquitoes which prevented them from sleeping.

“ ‘ I’ll see the corporal myself,’ said the attorney, who was young in the profession, and starving for want of business. ‘ I may hammer a good defence out of this, and I’ll retain ———, who is a shrewd fellow at cross-examination.’ But I must suppress the compliment,” said the barrister, “ which he was pleased to pay your humble servant, and proceed with my story.

“ In a short time, the corporal was closetted with the attorney at his office. Hutchinson repeated the statement he had made to the town-major, but with one accessory circumstance, which he had then omitted. It was this: that when the serjeant’s ghost first spoke to him, the corporal thought it smelt a little of brandy, as if it had just taken a dram. It did not, however, seem probable enough to be mentioned to the town-major, but he had since called it to mind, and the longer he thought about it, the more he was convinced that his senses had not deceived him. The attorney came to one of these conclusions; either that the serjeant was still living, which was fortified by the smell which the corporal had perceived whilst he conversed with his ghost; or that, if murdered, he had been murdered by Britton and his wife, and that the corporal and the prisoners had been egregiously duped by their imaginations in regard to his re-appear-

ance. ‘ Yet,’ said the attorney, ‘ the watch in the winch-pillow ! At any rate, it will be a case of robbery against the man and woman, even if the serjeant turns up, sufficient to discredit their evidence against these poor fellows. So don’t let us forget the watch.’

“ And he did not forget it ; for he sent off instantly relays of bearers to each of the three choultries between Madras and Arcot ; and having, instructed me to move the court to put off the trial till the last day of the sessions, proceeded with the greatest expedition to that station, where he arrived late in the evening. Early the next morning, the magistrate with his peons attended him to the hut, the door of which they burst open. The winch-pillow was searched,—*and the watch found !* ‘ The ghost’s word for a thousand pounds !’ exclaimed the attorney ; and having taken the precaution to subpœna the magistrate, he returned to the presidency.

“ It was a singular case, and the defence was equally singular. It was threefold:—first, that the prisoners had not committed the murder ; secondly, that it was committed by Britton and his wife ; thirdly, that no murder had been committed at all, the serjeant being still living. In the meanwhile, the minutest search was made for Hawley,—

in the Black Town, Vepery, Chepauk, and every suburban hole and corner around Madras. Constables and peons dragged every punch-house; nay, the ships lying in the roads were searched, with the exception of H. M. ship *Bellerophon*, which fired a swivel at Tom Eglan's party, headed by himself, just as they were under her quarter, and preparing to go on board. 'Let *Billy Ruffian* alone,' said Tom, and wisely hauled off.

"In spite, however, of these perquisitions, Serjeant Hawley was not to be found; and the prisoners were put on their trial. I took care that the two witnesses for the Crown should be examined apart from each other. Britton, accordingly, was first sworn. In substance, he repeated what he had already sworn in his depositions. But though the cross-examination did not shake the main parts of his evidence, he became dreadfully agitated, pale as death itself, and the sweat ran profusely down his face. At the end of it, he fell down, and was carried out of court in a state of mental agony and bodily exhaustion. All this, however, was so irreconcilable with the manner of a witness speaking the truth, that no one could give his testimony the least credit; nay many, and I was of the number, jumped into an opposite extreme, and believed that he himself had either committed the murder or was

privy to its perpetration. A confused murmur ran through the court-house when the woman appeared. But it is impossible to describe the sensation which pervaded bench, jurors, bar, and auditory, when, her hair floating in the wildest disorder over her face, which was lighted up with an expression that thrilled every heart with horror, the old sybil, in a voice between a scream and a groan, cried out, ‘ I saw him ! I saw him ! his wounds bleeding afresh as soon as he came up to me ! Yes, with these eyes I saw him ! The prisoners are innocent ! ’ Whatever this might mean, the judges stopped the proceeding, and the two lads were acquitted.

“ There was, however, another debt due to justice. The man and woman were conducted before two magistrates in the grand-jury-room. They confessed the murder, and declared they had first stunned and afterwards stabbed their victim ; that they had heard him boast of having money concealed about his person, but, from the hurry and confusion of the scene and the perturbation of their feelings, it had eluded their search ; but they took his watch, which they hid in the winch-pillow of their bed, and dragged the body to the back of the hut, where they wrapped it up in a tent-cloth. In a short time, a bill of indictment was prepared, and found by the grand jury. The next morning

saw them arraigned at the bar : a memorable alternation almost without a precedent in the records of criminal jurisprudence ! To the indictment they pleaded *guilty*. Their confessions, signed by the magistrates, were read. They received sentence of death, and the following day was appointed for their execution.

“ The confessions that led to their conviction were the fruit of those compunctious visitings of nature to which the most depraved are sometimes accessible. In this instance, they had been wrought to a full disclosure of their guilt, by a delusion akin to that which had been experienced by the corporal and the two soldiers—the phantasm that had cheated their senses under the guise of the deceased serjeant. For, on the same night, when it was seen by Hutchinson and the prisoners, and nearly about the same hour, it was seen also by the wretched culprits. It shook its bloody head at them, and pointed to a ghastly wound in its breast. They had been walking on the beach near the Black Town, when the apparition advanced through the surf towards them, and after the dreadful and appalling gestures just described, vanished from their sight. Affrighted consciences might adequately account for such a phenomenon. Something, however, much more inexplicable took place afterwards.

“ Never was so dense a multitude assembled to witness the awful consummation of the law. Never was less commiseration felt for its unhappy victims than for these persons, who had conspired to sacrifice two innocent men in the prime of life by an infamous complication of perjury and murder. Even that caste of the native population, who shrink with horror from the infliction of death upon the meanest reptile that crawls the earth, acknowledged its moral rightfulness in a case of such singular atrocity. The criminals had now ascended the scaffold, and while they were muttering a few inarticulate prayers for Divine mercy, and the chockly, who performs the degrading duty of executioner, was adjusting the cords to their necks—just at that moment there arose a hollow murmur, like the roar of winds pent up in rocks, and—side by side with the hangman—stood Serjeant Hawley, exactly as he appeared to the corporal, in regimentals, red, with yellow facings! The apparition, if apparition it was, drew a shriek of agony from the condemned wretches. In an instant, the drop fell; they died without a struggle; but the serjeant disappeared, no one can tell how or where, and was never heard of from that moment. Yet he was seen on the scaffold by thousands, and by five and twenty at least of his comrades, who bore the most

positive attestation to the fact. The executioner saw him also, but, busied in the sad duties of his office, marked not how he came or whither he vanished.

“For my own part,” said the barrister, “I was never satisfied with that case. The serjeant’s death was not proved satisfactorily to my mind; but certain it is that he eluded every effort to discover him.

“A variety of theories were afloat. I had mine. The watch found in the place which the ghost had indicated; the disappearance of the body from the garden behind the hut where the murderers had left it; above all, the brandy, of which the serjeant was redolent when he ‘revisited the glimpses of the moon,’ during the corporal’s guard, lent some confirmation to the surmise generally current, that it was the identical Serjeant Hawley himself, who had been *corporally* visible on each of these occasions. Nor were there wanting some who believed that the serjeant, stunned not killed by his supposed assassins, took to his heels, glad of the opportunity to desert, and having skulked to Madras, buried himself in the recesses of the Black Town for a time, and having in the early part of his life served in several ships of war, entered himself as an able-bodied seaman on board the *Bellerophon*,

whose stern swivel fired, it may be remembered, so uncourteous a salute to Tom Eglan's party. But how he could appear in those memorable *avatars*, or pay such mysterious visits on shore, is a question that has baffled all conjecture. It has been suspected that what the corporal took for a vapour, hovering over the surf, was a masulah-boat, in which he left the ship. Here, however, conjecture must pause. The problem was never solved, and I confess that I am not Œdipus enough to unravel it."

Here the barrister concluded. It had the effect for which he intended it. The cold reserves of our good friend the colonel were instantly thawed, if I may use the phrase. "Its a d—d odd story," he said, "but I can beat it. A circumstance happened when I was at the siege——." But the colonel's story must be given in a future number.

REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD INDIAN OFFICER.

III.

WHEN we next met at our old friend the colonel's table, we reminded him of his pledge, to tell us something equivalent to the tale of the Supreme Court, with which the barrister had amused us ; every one admitting it to be one of the strangest combinations of the wild probabilities that are for ever occurring in the real world, as if in emulation of the inventions that fancy puts forth in that of romance.

“ Mankind,” observed the barrister, “ are too idle to fix the precise line of discrimination between the two, which fade and melt into each other, like the colours of a changeable silk. Such incidents seem occasionally interposed, as if to rebuke the presumption of human ignorance, which assigns laws and limitations to that which is probable. It is just such trifling, as if the mathematician were to give geometrical definitions to the countless shapes

into which the glaciers shoot their icy masses. And so darkling and bewildered are our judgments, when they are exercised on matters out of the beaten track of experience, that we have accused travellers and historians of falsehood, who have been, for a cycle of years, oppressed by unjust condemnation, until some brightening gleam of testimony has shone forth to redeem them into faith and acceptation. It was so with Bruce, the most interesting of travellers. For years he hung a dead-weight upon the shelves of his bookseller. It required only another traveller to find his way to Gondar, and to cut a live beef-steak from an Abyssinian ox,—and up started Bruce white-washed into fresh credit, like a certificated bankrupt. The same thing happened to the elder voyagers. Sir John Mandeville, after passing through the purgatory of lying travellers, has again emerged into credibility, with his sins purged and burnt away, and blooms like an American aloe at the end of a century. And what is more, Ferdinand Mendez de Pinto, “that liar of the first magnitude,” who drew such large drafts on the credulity of his own age, finds all his bills duly honoured by the liberality of ours.”

“You are right,” ejaculated the colonel. “But the incredulity, while it lasts, does infinite harm to

the cause of truth itself. Whip me a score of the fastidious blockheads one meets every day at the presidency, who refuse to believe any thing they cannot comprehend, and cannot comprehend any thing they have not seen !”

“ It is ‘ wisdom at one entrance quite shut out,’ ” returned the barrister.

“ Would you believe it ? ” said the colonel ; “ the other day, at the governor’s table,—there was Captain Catlap, who, you know, is at every tea-party, eternally doling out, amongst the women, the mouldy crusts and broken bits he scrapes out of magazines and reviews—well, this puppy, who dearly loves to hear himself talk, had got close to the old master-attendant, who, you know, though deaf as a post, pretends to hear every word that is addressed to him. The lady governess’s favourite monkey had just stolen into the room, and this gave Catlap an opportunity to pester not only his deaf auditor, but those who were not deaf, with some nonsense about the natural history of monkies he had got from Buffon or Goldsmith. And then he went on depreciating the whole race—giving them some credit, indeed, for cunning and mischievous tricks, but terming them ‘ ludicrous satires upon humanity.’—‘ Pshaw ! ’ said I,—you know what my *pshaws*! mean.—‘ Pshaw ! You got

that stuff from Buffon, who never saw ten monkies in his life, but studied the degraded mockeries of them exhibited in menageries,—their native powers dulled by imprisonment—their moral energies’— ‘Moral energies!’ interrupted Captain Catlap, bristling up his whiskers, and his lips curled into a sardonic grin. ‘Yes,’ I replied, ‘moral energies.’ He again interrupted me, for his incredulity overpowered his politeness. ‘Surely,’ he said, ‘you do not assert that they are rational beings, endued with discourse, and with reason, as Hamlet says, “looking before and after”?’ ‘I don’t care a fig,’ said I, ‘what Hamlet says—but this *I* say, from my own personal observation and knowledge: I have lived twenty years amongst them and the more I have seen of them, the more have I admired their proficiency in the arts of civil life—their polity—their frame of government—their laws—their science, if science be the adaptation of means to ends. And Captain Catlap,’ I said, ‘when, through the mere imperfection of language, we affect to degrade a man by calling him a monkey, we forget that we are inadvertently paying him a compliment; for there is no analogy that renders it at all plausible as a reproach. Never in my life did I know a monkey who was a shallow conceited coxcomb.’ I could have supported my position by

a series of unquestionable facts, but I would not run the risk of an impertinent contradiction, or a look of ideotic disbelief, and therefore said no more."

Here the barrister, who seemed inclined towards Captain Catlap's theory, exclaimed, with some emphasis, "my good friend, can these be your real sentiments touching that singular race?"

"Unquestionably," said the colonel. "I could fill a volume of much better biography than the press is, from month to month, teeming with in England, with the social qualities and traits of character of poor Hieronymo, a favourite monkey once attached to my household,—the companion of my toils, the solace of my leisure hours—I might say, 'my guide, philosopher, and friend.'" Here, albeit unused to the melting mood, the colonel would willingly have brushed away unnoticed the tear that stole down his cheek.

"Dead, I suppose?" said the barrister. "No, not dead," returned the colonel. "Dead, indeed, to the world, for he retired several years ago to a religious society of his tribe at Trichinopoly. Why, it was the same venerable creature who, if you recollect, warned me to lie still, whilst myriads of Juggernaut's pilgrims were trampling me beneath their feet."

We eagerly expressed our desire to hear something about Hieronymo, who had drawn so affectionate a token of sympathy from our excellent friend.

“ I can only give you a few detached fragments of his character,” replied he, “ for his history” (shaking his head with a mysterious solemnity) “ belongs to other times as well as to our’s. However, let that pass.—It is an incredulous age. I am not a candidate for ridicule ; so I can only give you an anecdote or two, to enable you to form your own judgments of him.” We besought him to proceed.

“ It’s all true, by ——,” began the colonel, with his wonted exordium. “ It was a sad time for the Company’s troops, that expedition of Lord Cornwallis against Tippoo. Never were such privations undergone, or sustained with greater fortitude. Indeed, grumbling would have been of little use. We cursed and swore occasionally, it is true, and our curses were loud as well as deep ; and if the commander-in-chief had heard our criticisms on his blunders, whilst we devoted him and his whole staff to the infernal deities, perhaps the general orders day after day would not have teemed with such handsome panegyrics upon our patriotism and good feeling :—phrases which were admirable sops in the

pan, to reconcile us to the hardships inflicted on us by the most infernal commissariat that ever cursed a fine body of troops. Horses and bullocks sunk by hundreds on the march ;—and having died of fatigue, or fever caused by fatigue, they made most execrable soup and still more abominable curries. I was then lieutenant, and had to bring up some stragglers, the baggage having been impeded by the rains and the weakness of the cattle, which had been cast off by Tippoo himself, and for that reason purchased at an inferior price. Tim Shepperd, Jamie Craig, myself, two ensigns, and Hieronymo, whom I have already introduced to your acquaintance, had got, with extreme difficulty, on our wretched tatties, as far as the Cauvul Choultry, about half a mile from the right bank of the Cauvery, having eighteen miles further to march to Allambaddy, where we had a chance of rejoining a larger detachment, and obtaining a few rations of provisions.

“ It was a large, convenient structure, divided into several apartments for the repose of travellers; and if our group could be deemed a fit subject of satirical delineation, an artist would have made a good hand of it. Having got our baggage under cover, and disposed our waggons, horses, and bullocks as well as we could, we supplied our ragged

band of sepoys with their rice, and sat down in sage deliberation as to the means of satisfying some natural cravings of our own, which began to be somewhat importunate. I looked on Hieronymo, who on these occasions was wont to give at least some useful hint, his minute knowledge of the country frequently pointing out to us some unexpected resource or other, when our own wisdom was at fault ; but I perused no consolation in his visage. A loaf of mouldy bread, half a seer of rice, and the remains of a ham nearly picked to the bone, were all we could muster to furnish forth our table. We looked, you may suppose, exceedingly grave, and for some minutes remained silent, till some one missed Hieronymo, and called out—‘ where’s Hieronymo !—where’s our Grand Alguazil ?’—(I’ll tell you presently why he was called by that name.)

“ And true it was, the little fellow was gone, nobody could say where,—for no one had seen him steal away, though a minute or two before he was one of our melancholy conclave. You must pardon the episode, if I tell you what little I could scrape together about this strange being, before he became one of my family. To describe him as the most faithful, the most intelligent of his kind, would not be doing him half justice. By every claim of zeal,

gratitude, affection, he asserted a right to be classed with the higher species of which, for some wise but inscrutable purpose, his race are for awhile destined to be at once the reproach and the mimics. How the account will be settled hereafter, as to comparative merit, betwixt his tribe and humanity, must be left until that final adjustment of all things, when no false weights will disturb the scale of justice.

“ Hieronymo, besides, was a mysterious being.—Don't smile.—By —, it is true;—true as I live by bread. He was never young, and never old; always in middle age. My old friend Major Drillham, who, on his death-bed, recommended him to my protection, or rather recommended me to his, was a man of veracity, and he assured me that, in point of age, the Alguazil had far exceeded the utmost longevity of his kind, for nearly a century before he knew him; and the Grand Alguazil could not have lived with the major less than five-and-twenty years. For a long portion of time, the good old major had no other companion; and it was most pleasant to observe the more than fraternal affection that bound them to each other. From long study of their mutual wishes, a communion of language, inarticulate to our apprehensions, but sufficient for every purpose of social intercourse, existed

between them. There sat old Drillham, his legs swinging across one elbow of his chair, whilst the Grand Alguazil occupied another by the side of it, watching every line and feature of his face, to discover what he wanted. If, after dinner, he gave a certain signal to Hieronymo, you saw the little page dart, half leap half run, to the verandah, for the hookah and its apparatus.—But I forgot to tell you why he was called the Grand Alguazil.

“The major was not rich, his pay and batta reaching him only in scanty dribblings, for it was stopped by a mill-dam of old debts as soon as it left the paymaster’s desk. The little which the dubash left him, at the beginning of the month, the major used to deposit in some unfrequented hole and corner, where he thought it safe from depredation. The sum was small, but it sufficed for a month’s frugal living, till the following one came round, and the loss of it would have driven him to sad straits. There was a little squab of a butler, in whom the major placed great confidence. He had marked the snug recess in which his master had lodged his rupees, and thought if he could help himself to some arrears of wages, there would not be much harm in it. As soon as the cash was missed, it may easily be imagined what a bustle ensued. Suspicions fell first upon one, then upon

another,—the cook,—the cook's maty,—massalgee,—hookabadar ; but the old major never dreamt that the butler had any part in its abstraction. Perplexed, but determined to detect the culprit, he gave orders to send for the conjurer, one of those men to be found in every Hindoo village, who, by working on the superstitious terrors of the natives, generally contrive to elicit the guilty secret.

“ ‘ No sooner,’—thus old Drillham used to tell the story,—‘ did Hieronymo hear the order, than, running up to me, and looking fixedly at my eyes, which were his lode-stars on all occasions, he shook his head, and began a rapid kind of speech, which we are apt to deem nothing more than unmeaning chatter. But I understood every word of it. He assured me, on his honour, there was no occasion to send for the conjurer ; that he knew the thief, but could not, for particular reasons, reveal his name, and promised me he would get back the money. So I left it in the Grand Alguazil's hands, as I always called him from that day. It was little more than half an hour, when, having significantly twitched me by the skirt of my coat, he led me to the spot whence the money had disappeared. And there,’ said the old major, ‘ the rupees were, sure enough, safe and sound, and not a fanam missing. I learned afterwards that it was the butler who had

taken it; but not till he had committed a more serious depredation. The fact was, the Grand Alguazil had carefully screened him from discovery, in the first instance, in return for numerous offices of kindness he had received from the butler. The second delinquency, which he detected with his usual shrewdness, seemed to have entirely alienated him from his friendship;—and the fellow was dismissed forthwith.’

“The Grand Alguazil, as the old major assured me, unravelled, in both instances, the guilt of the party, with a degree of judgment, in which his human fac-similes would probably have been found wanting. And he was enabled to do this by his accurate observance of the man’s countenance when the money was missed, and his long experience of the sympathetic discourse which is always going on between the face of a man and his heart. ‘It is needless to say,’ the major remarked, ‘that no more larcenies were committed within my household. Their superstition came in aid of their honesty; for, deeming Hieronymo to be the corporeal residence of a brahmin, they venerated him as a superior intelligence, whose eye could discover the most hidden secret.’

“But,” continued the colonel, “it was not till the poor major was no more, that the Grand Al-

guazil followed my fortunes—and faithfully and devotedly followed them.

“ Now, this is a long digression, but it was necessary you should know something of the Grand Alguazil’s habits and character before he came to live with me. But I must still digress; for I hinted that there was a mystery in his life;—and so there was, a strange, awful, solemn mystery.—Now don’t smile :—better laugh outright, and tell me I lie.”

We assured the colonel we did not smile, but were on the rack to hear something more about the Grand Alguazil. The colonel was pacified, and went on.

“ Well, then—but it is right to tell you beforehand, that I shall indent as largely on your credulity as a paymaster on the Company’s factory at Ingeveram, when he wants clothing for his whole regiment. Now, as I told you, the Grand Alguazil lived with the major twenty-five years. The major enticed him away from Governor Verelst, who had him from Mr. Watts, who received him as a present from Lord Clive. It is quite certain,—I have it from MSS. now in my possession, which were bequeathed me by Major Drillham (he used to call them Hieronymo’s title-deeds),—that the Alguazil was present at the battle of Plassy, and,

when the firing began to be too serious a joke, contrived to climb a tree in the tope, from whence he could discern all the operations of that wonderful day; and such was his discernment, that though several of his tribe, who followed the fortunes of Clive's little band, deserted to the stronger side, when they observed such odds as seventy thousand men supported by fifty pieces of cannon against three thousand, he remained to the last confident in the ultimate triumph of that small but determined body over the hosts of Surajah Dowlah.

“I mention this,” continued the colonel, “as furnishing some slight elements for the calculation of the immense age of the Grand Alguazil. But the manuscript traces it still higher. For Clive had him from Holwell, and it is quite certain that the identical Hieronymo was in existence, neither young nor old, long before,—at the court of Aurungzebe. But I will go no higher, for you may suspect me of playing on your credulity. So I return to the Cauvul Choultry, where, you may remember, we were sitting with no food to appease our appetites but what was so bad, that famine itself would have turned aside from it with loathing.

In the meanwhile, the fury of the elements was unabated, when the sudden disappearance of the Grand Alguazil from the shelter of the choultry

smote our hearts, for he was a general favourite. We looked out ourselves, sent out sepöys, coolies, bearers, in all directions, but all to no purpose. I should have been the loudest in my regret, but for the secret assurance that he would speedily turn up again ; and so he did. For, just as we were about to divide our mouldy loaf, and to steep it in water, out of tenderness to our teeth, and Tim Shepperd had begun to whistle, as he always did on such occasions, a few despairing bars of *Grammachree Molly*, and Ensign Craig was beating the devil's tattoo with his knuckles,—in this state of despair and destitution, we heard a rustling noise on the outside of the verandah, when in rode, dripping wet, the Grand Alguazil on the back of a fine young kid, which he was spurring and goading along, after the fashion of an experienced rough rider,—but not being able to prevail on him to mount the steps, he was holding him by the fore legs, to prevent his escape, and chattering all the time loudly for assistance. To cut the matter short, the kid was soon killed, and his hinder quarters spitted before a good fire. ‘Worth the whole commissariat!’ exclaimed, or rather swore, Tim Shepperd. ‘Well done, little Hieronymo!’ But, as if to elude our praises, the Alguazil again disappeared. It was only, however, to return, at the

expiration of another half-hour, with a little basket, his frame tottering beneath the weight, containing three bottles of Madeira! How, whence, by what means, he could have obtained such precious supplies, we were too hungry to inquire; for, by this time, two roasted legs of delicious kid, with what little rice we had saved, were smoking on the table, and to enquiries of the Grand Alguazil, he shook his head and was silent. So, having placed a plate of rice before him (he was too rigid a brahmin to touch animal food), we set to like famished wolves.

“We had just begun to awaken the night-owl with a catch, or some noise that answered the same purpose, when a voice, apparently of one in haste and impatient to be admitted, was heard from the steps of the verandah. Whoever it was, he spoke English, though with a foreign accent,—and, in answer to the sentinel’s challenge, exclaimed lustily ‘friend!’ Immediately, a tall figure, wrapt in a cloak, came stumbling over the carcasses of bullocks, dooly-bearers, and coolies, into the apartment, which was echoing with our carousals.

“‘*Bos, fur, sus atque sacerdos,*’ cried the padrè, on his entrance. ‘In plain English, I have nearly broken my neck over your bullocks;—that is *bos*.—I am in pursuit of a thief;—that is *fur*: there he is,’ pointing to the Grand Alguazil, who

began to chatter with evident emotion. ‘And I am the priest—*sacerdos*—whom he has robbed.’ It was no other than the kind-hearted and amiable Schwartz. ‘But who would have thought it?’ continued the *padrè*; ‘the Grand Alguazil himself! The thief-taker turned thief! *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*’ Hieronymo seemed to understand every word he said—Latin and all; and to enjoy the *padrè*’s facetiousness as much as any of us. In fact, they were not strangers to each other; for Schwartz had known Hieronymo for at least three generations of his European patrons. Ere we could give him a hospitable welcome, ‘here,’ said the *padrè*, loosening his cloak, and bringing out three additional bottles of wine, with a fine salted tongue and a dozen of fresh biscuits, ‘you see, my gaberdine covers a few sins now and then;—and you, for once, gentlemen, shall be my confessors.’

“I mention these things, not as *bon mots*, which the excellent *padrè* never affected, but merely as specimens of his peculiar habits of conversation. Of course, this valuable accession to our society, and to the nectar that gladdened it, was truly seasonable. The *padrè*,—whose labours as a missionary, if not more meritorious, were at least thrice as efficacious as those of later days,—because he

had studied the Hindoos too deeply to disgust them with vehement railings against their own religion and usages, as a mode of recommending or enforcing his own, and felt that the denunciation of eternal punishment to those who refused to accept the doctrines he proffered, was not the most humane or effectual way of propagating them,—was, notwithstanding, diligent in his calling. To ingratiate himself with the Hindoos, he became half a Hindoo himself—made himself acquainted with their language—and moved about, from place to place, sheltering himself in the meanest hut of a village, if ignorance was to be dispelled, or superstition enlightened, or sorrow comforted. At the period of this adventure, he had fixed his residence in a small village, concealed from our view by a tope, in the midst of which rose the few straggling huts of which it consisted. But it had not escaped the penetrating glance of Hieronymo. He knew that hunger after a long march was too serious a matter to be trifled with, and having, by a process of reasoning peculiar to himself, inferred that a European was living in the village, and if so, that there must be something within his curtelage palatable to European stomachs, he had dexterously availed himself of the padré's small store of worldly comforts for our relief.

“ In the meanwhile, the storm that had abated sufficiently to permit the padrè to walk from his hut to the choultry, burst out again with redoubled fury. I looked out; the night was as dark as a wolf’s mouth. Schwartz, though anxious to return, did not venture to brave the rain that descended in torrents, and made the whole country around us a vast lake. The choultry, indeed, had been providently elevated considerably above its level, which was low, and in the monsoon season exposed to frequent inundations. ‘ It is a naughty night to swim in, as King Lear says,’ observed the padrè, and again sat down in familiar chat with us, partaking, though sparingly, of the little collation he had brought with him.

“ The conversation turned upon Hieronymo. ‘ A cleverer fellow,’ said the padrè, ‘ will not be found speedily. A long chain of authentic tradition is appended to his name. It reaches (here the padrè lowered his voice to a tone of deep solemnity) beyond the period of Aurungzebe—and what is more, there is not a province or town in India, either in the peninsula or India proper, where he is not known and respected. But I must not say more at present.’ Here the padrè was lost in graver meditations than assorted with our convivial feelings, and seemed willing to change the theme ;

not, however, without mysteriously hinting something about the wandering Jew, and indefinite durations of longevity, connecting distant ages with each other, permitted for some dark and awful purposes. It was not till long after this, that I became acquainted with some of the earlier and more wonderful passages of Hieronymo's history, but having been imparted to me under the religious injunctions of secrecy, I must not blazon them.

“Meanwhile, the discourse assumed a gayer turn, and the good father, whose habits were neither austere nor ascetic, kept us alive, till a late hour, with an unceasing fund of pleasant anecdote. From time to time we peeped out. All around the choultry, the atmosphere was thick and fog-wrapt, whilst the rain descended in a vast torrent, resembling a diffused water-spout. In less than a quarter of an hour, there was an appalling roar, as of tumbling waters. ‘The mound is burst,’ exclaimed Schwartz, ‘and the river is out!’ His fears were prophetic. The choultry stood like an island in the midst of a watery waste. We passed an anxious, and of course a sleepless night. Daylight disclosed the scene in all its terrors. The overflowing of the Cauvery had spread a white gleam of desolation

nearly to the extent of the horizon. Not a hut was to be seen. The wasteful spirit of the element had left no vestige of man or his operations. The rain had ceased, but the depth of water was such, as to render every effort of proceeding on our march quite hopeless till it should subside. But when this would happen, was not a matter of easy calculation. The coco-trees and plantains, indeed, still waved their stately branches, like lusty swimmers breasting the flood; but those of lower stature, all in short which are called jungle, had totally vanished. It was a scene which would have furnished Poussin himself with hints to improve his grand picture of the Deluge. A part of our cattle, which had occupied the lower ground near the choultry, had been swept away; but the more valuable portion, with our horses, baggage-waggon, and doolies, remained fortunately uninjured.

“What was to be done? Drowning by venturing on, or starving by remaining at the choultry, presented a dismal alternative. The village and its inhabitants had been swept away. Even supposing the roads fordable, they were no longer to be tracked without a guide accurately acquainted with the risings as well as the dips and falls of the soil. Schwartz recommended us to trust in Providence; but there was an affrighted dejection

in his countenance, which was rather a faithless commentary upon the resignation he inculcated. Our breakfast was far from a cheerful one, for it consumed the last fragments of the night's banquet. Tim Shepperd tried a bar or two of *Grammachree Molly*, but it would not do ; and he then looked as blank as a mile-stone. The ensign, whose facetiousness was at all times irrepressible, addressed the venerable padrè with a sigh : ' well, father, we shall all be in heaven before to-morrow noon.' ' God forbid, my son,' replied the missionary, in a fit of momentary inadvertence.

" ' But consolation is at hand,' exclaimed Schwartz, after looking round him for a few minutes. ' Hieronymo is absent !' The omen was instantly hailed, for we all confided,—for my part I knew not why,—in the inexhaustible resources of Hieronymo. If it be true, I said to myself, that his is a charmed life,—if these traditions of his indestructibility are authentic,—he, who has seen so many generations of his own kind and of ours swept away like leaves before the hurricane, must have garnered up wisdom infinitely transcending the scanty gleanings picked up by us who are merely of yesterday. The padrè overheard my soliloquy. ' Yes,' said he, ' and Providence, my son, often shews those, who are the meanest in our darkened

estimates, to be the highest in his own, by making them the chosen instruments of his beneficence.' We passed many hours in this state of gloom and anxiety. Yet, paradox though it be, here were six of us belonging to the proud race calling themselves *lords* of the creation, and never abating a jot of their supremacy to any created thing,—here we were, crouching in abject dependence on the superior sagacity of a being despised as the mean mimic of our nature, countenanced only as a buffoon and jester, and paid in the proverbial coin of kicks and cuffs, appropriately termed 'his allowance.'

"Would you believe it?" continued the colonel. —"Now don't give me that incredulous stare. It's all true, by ——." We besought him to proceed.

"Well, I was saying," rejoined our amusing friend, "our safety depended as it were on a single cast. To keep you no longer in suspense, the Grand Alguazil returned, but not alone; for we perceived him, as he sometimes swam, sometimes paddled along, in the mode known to swimmers by the phrase 'treading water,' followed by four of his own tribe, each with a bamboo in his hand, who, strange as it may sound, shewed him the utmost deference and obeisance, and as he mounted the verandah, stood on the lower step, as an

acknowledgment of submission to his orders. But it was with the padrè alone that Hieronymo communed on this occasion. ‘Hieronymo,’ said the missionary, ‘counsels instant departure; nay, he peremptorily insists on your resuming the march. He undertakes to be answerable for our safety; and, for my own part, I require no other guarantee.’ At the word, I gave orders for every thing to be got ready. At the place whence our march began, the waters did not rise higher than the diameter of the waggon-wheels, permitting the bullocks, though with difficulty, to drag them along where the soil was hard. The peril of the expedition lay in finding our way through a country abounding in tanks, and intersected by innumerable ravines and ditches dug to irrigate the paddy-fields, some of which were deep enough to swallow us up, equipage and all, and presenting no landmarks, at least none with which we were acquainted, to keep us in the direction of the beaten track, where the waters would probably be shallow enough to allow our advance.

“We felt nervous and uneasy. Tim Shepperd, though he contrived to whistle the complete air of *Grammachree Molly*, looked, as well as the rest, the picture of dismay, when he cast his eyes on the world of waters around him. It seemed like the

ocean ; but the ocean without the security of a ship ; the ocean traversed by means of land-pilotage only, and that too rendered dubious and uncertain in the absence of every feature which marks the surface of a country. For it happened that our route lay through a champaign level, without hills, or topes, or pagodas ;—in short, without one distinct or definite locality. We had accommodated the amiable priest with a dooly, the sick sepoy who had occupied it on the march being convalescent enough to wade on foot with the rest of the party, whilst we mounted our horses, —the whole being under the guidance of Hieronymo, to whom I resigned the entire command. It was pleasant to hear him, as he sat perched on the top of the first waggon, issuing orders from time to time to his little myrmidons, who preceded the train as so many Tritons, sounding the depth with their bamboos, like pilots heaving the lead, and moving along by a process resembling that of the arch-fiend on his way to Paradise, which partook of walking, wading, swimming, flying ; whilst their superior looked around with an eye that bespoke at once foresight, circumspection, and determination of purpose. Once or twice, indeed, he seemed to waver, but after a short halt, motioned us to proceed. I remarked, however, that he would

tolerate no noise. A whisper or murmur appeared to distract his attention ; for there was not a faculty of his soul which was not intensely exercised in the conduct of our little march. It was the epitome of the courage, coolness, and address, with which Xenophon led his ten thousand. In four hours, we advanced at least eight miles ; and when the labour and fatigue of such a journey are duly considered, it must be classed amongst those surprising instances of perils encountered and difficulties vanquished, which deserve no ignoble place in the narratives of campaigns and battles.

“ And yet ”—here the colonel heaved a deep sigh—“ the march, memorable as it was, has been passed over by every historian in silence. Even the General Orders, which issue oracles more lying than those of Delphos itself, if the Honourable Colonel Such-a-one, or some beardless lieutenant of a lord, is to be praised up to the stars, spoke not a word of poor Hieronymo. Nay, you may search all the gazettes and journals of the time, and you will not find so much as the mention of his name !”

“ He shared the same fate,” interrupted the barrister, “ as the heroes who lived before the time of Agamemnon.”

“ Precisely so,” said the colonel. “ But though he may want his *vatis sacer*, he shall not want his

biographer. There it is, all ready for the publisher," pointing to a bundle of manuscript on a side-table. "Indeed, I had resolved not to publish it till after his death ; but that is an event not likely to happen in our time," he observed with emphatic gravity.

"Those eight miles, however," continued the colonel, "brought us out of all danger. We halted at Manoor, which the waters had scarcely reached, and were supplied with milk, rice, and fowls, by the cuttawal, at the simple requisition of the padrè, whose name was a passport through the whole peninsula. I was particularly anxious to talk over with that amiable man the astonishing resources of the Grand Alguazil, and to elicit from him, if I could, more of his antecedent history than the few detached fragments he had already imparted. But the padrè looked much graver than usual, evidently disconcerted by my importunity. 'Urge me no further, I beseech you,' said he: 'we are sometimes snatched from earthly dangers by unearthly agencies.'

"I had forgot to tell you, that, no sooner had we reached Manoor, than the little satellites of Hieronymo, who had rendered us such important services, were seen no more. They flitted away as shadows, though my eyes were at the very moment fixed upon them. As for Hieronymo, he lived

with me for a month or two after. But whether he was disgusted at the incredulity with which my narrative of his services was received, or at his being so entirely neglected at head-quarters, or whether in compliance with a religious vow, I never saw or heard any more of him till I recognized him amongst the brahmins of his tribe at the great pagoda of Trichinopoly, where he gave me, as you remember, that important admonition, which prevented me from being trodden to death by Juggernaut's worshippers. It's all true," said the colonel, as he concluded.—"By —, if you laugh, I will never tell you another story."

REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD INDIAN OFFICER.

IV.

WE thanked the colonel for his anecdotes of the Grand Alguazil; but the barrister could not abstain from remarking that, out of the vast store-house of so long a military experience, he might have selected something that, hovering on the very brink of improbability, would at the same time be more stirring and awakening in its effect.

“ I am far from denying,” said he, “ that Hieronymo’s adventures are passing strange; but they are obviously interwoven with a tissue of the supernatural—at least, enough to subdue and blunt the edge of the emotions excited by those incidents, in which nature, confining herself, as it were, to her own workshop, weaves a web, wild and fanciful indeed, out of the intricate and puzzled skein of mere human agencies. Now Hieronymo was a being either belonging to, or commercing with, the unknown world. He is something ‘ the earth

owns not'—the denizen of another orb, whose participation in the concerns of our own is that of a blind and fated minister, who does the biddings and acts from the impulse of an overruling will. The miracle dissipates the mystery, as the sun dissolves frost-work. Yet if our excellent friend would overhaul his knapsack, he would be at no loss for adventures, in which, how strange and even miraculous soever (for the poverty of language drives us to the metaphor), even obscurity is cleared, and every involution unravelled, without a moment's rupture of continuity in that grand chain of causation, which contains and circumscribes all human affairs.

“And it is astonishing,” continued the barrister, “what singular dramas, tragedy and comedy, alternately provoking tears and laughter, nature gets up in her own theatre: examine them, you will find that her plots are as intricate, and in one sense as artificial, as those of a regular dramatic author aiming at the gratification of an audience. Nay, the comic poets have sometimes pilfered her best plots; and especially when nature, as she sometimes does, condescending as it were to be a plagiarist from herself, makes one individual an exact fac-simile *usque ad unguem* of another. These casual resemblances, however, which some-

times perplex us as with the confusion of a carnival, are providentially of most rare occurrence ; otherwise the social machine would be stopped in its movement, and life rendered unquiet and unsafe. For, conceive an Antipholis of Ephesus and an Antipholis of Syracuse, with their corresponding Dromios, in every city of Great Britain. Things would revert to chaos and disorder. Nor, in truth, would there be any thing intrinsically comic, if Amphitryons and Sosias were frequently to find their way to our wives and their soubrettes. Happily, the mischief is counterbalanced by its rarity. That this is the case, is manifest from a remarkable fact in dramatic history. In the ancient theatres, where masques were worn by the actors, it was easy enough to get up the *Menæchmus* and the *Amphitryon* of Plautus ; whereas it never happened but once, and that was in Garrick's time, that Shakspeare's *Comedy of Errors* was performed with the complete theatric illusion of two human counterparts, so uniform in figure, feature, and complexion, that the audience would have been unable to discriminate them but by the variation of their dress. For the two Dromios he was obliged to put up with vague and general likeness. While the piece had its run, Antipholis of Syracuse, having unluckily committed a forgery, was hanged, and

in consequence of that catastrophe, as Garrick used to tell the story, the play was suspended also.

“ Yet neither Plautus nor Molière, rich in whim and frolic as they were, ever constructed a comedy, founded on a similar ambiguity, half so diverting as *Le Faux Martin Guère*—a case of personal identity thrice determined in three French parliaments, each adjudication being at variance with the other. The evidence of the senses, the primary source of human testimony and the only standard of judicial truth, was discredited and set at nought. The eye, the ear, and the touch, became complete fools and drivellers. That moral assurance, on which the understanding relies for all its conclusions, appeared extinct. Nothing, in short, seemed to be but what was not. Clouds of living witnesses were encountered by an opposing cloud, all uttering honest and uncorrupted attestations. Two wives were contradicted when they swore to their respective husbands—the uncle when he identified his nephew—the neighbours when they swore to a man who had been born and lived amongst them from his birth.

“ It is only by long and protracted cycles,” continued the barrister, “ that these strange ambiguities intervene to perplex the course of justice, as ships are misled by false lights. But there was

an Armenian cause tried in the Recorder's Court at Madras in the year 1798, and the question, turning upon some nice points of personal identity, involved also several curious, and I might say, fanciful details." The barrister was strongly pressed, and by the colonel with some importunity, for the particulars of that cause. "I will endeavour," said he, "to gratify you as far as my memory will serve me; but I can only give you a faint outline of its chief incidents, which occupy a voluminous bundle of papers, consisting of bills, answers, interrogatories, examinations before the master, oral testimony in issues of facts, interpleaders, in short, all the machinery of an equity-suit. The transactions included also the history of two generations, and therefore you must be satisfied with a sketchy recapitulation.

"The Armenians exist in small but detached communities throughout the East. They are at once a distinct race of mankind, and a peculiar sect of religious worshippers; being originally a schism of the Greek church, driven by the persecution of the emperors into the mountainous fastnesses of Armenia, and afterwards dispersed by the Persian conquests over Asia and a large portion of European Russia. They are under the ecclesiastical government of an archbishop and bishops, and

their pursuits being chiefly commercial, their habits are peaceful and unoffending ; in this respect they bear no remote analogy to quakers. They are remarkable for a peculiar costume, which distinguishes them amongst the crowds of Constantinople, of Moscow, and of every principal Oriental settlement : a cap or hat in the shape of a mitre, a plain coat puritanically simple, and of an olive colour, over a white tunic, which descends below their knees. Their intercommunion is generally preserved with great strictness, and unmixed by foreign alliances. This rule, however, is liable to some relaxations.

“ Jacob Arathoon, the head of an opulent family of that name resident for many generations in the Black Town, had by successful enterprize accumulated a large property. Having been, from humble beginnings, the architect of his own fortunes, he was naturally anxious for offspring, at least for an heir to perpetuate his immense possessions. But though every venture he made was propitious, and the winds that wafted his freights into every Eastern port brought them safely back with prosperous returns, his hopes in this respect, after having been married five years, were, year after year, frustrated. Prayers were offered up in the Armenian churches of Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay,

for the consummation so devoutly wished. But, to make the matter quite sure, letters were sent to the supreme pontiff of the Armenian church, then resident at St. Petersburg, for his benedictions on the married couple, and his intercession with the saints for the fertility of the spouse. Another year still rolled along; yet as more than half the habitable globe was to be compassed before an answer could arrive from the archbishop, they reposed with pious confidence in the efficacy of his prayers. But whilst no human means could wisely be neglected, Jacob, by the advice of a physician, despatched Doriclea on board a vessel bound to Batavia, change of air and climate producing sometimes a propitious effect in like cases; and the Armenian women being in general as well skilled in the gainful arts of traffic as their husbands, Jacob appointed her the supercargo of the valuable commodities with which he had freighted the ship. What made the expedition still more agreeable to Doriclea was, that her own sister, Johanna Moorat, who had been married a short time before to a wealthy Armenian merchant of that name, resided at Batavia, and would afford her a domicile whilst she remained in that settlement. She embarked, therefore, in the highest spirits, and not without certain private intimations, which were sufficient

for her own satisfaction, that the benedictions of the archbishop would, ere long, bless her with increase. And what was her delight, when, before the end of the voyage, she perceived symptoms still more unequivocal that the vows of the holy Abbas had been heard and answered ! On her arrival, her first care was to obey Jacob's instructions as to the disposal of the cargo. Having effected this, and laid in the usual return-investment, she despatched the vessel back with the welcome intelligence that she knew would pour gladness into the heart of her husband. She was not mistaken, for Jacob was half frantic with joy, and in a fit of unwonted generosity, bestowed a large quantity of wax candles to burn on the altar of the church, till the final consummation of the event he so ardently desired.

“ In the mean time, Doriclea found her sister, Johanna Moorat, occupying a splendid house in the vicinity of the town, and living in ease and affluence. Her husband had been absent a few months, on a mercantile expedition, to Ispahan, and, in all probability, would not return till the expiration of at least a year. The two sisters were tenderly attached to each other. Doriclea, having imparted her situation to Johanna, was gratified by a reciprocal intimation on her part, that she was

herself bearing a burden equally agreeable. They were both delighted when a letter arrived from Jacob, enjoining Doriclea to remain with her sister till her delivery. Doriclea fondly anticipated the raptures with which her spouse would welcome the accomplishment of his protracted hopes, and Johanna, on her part, hugged the anticipation of the pleasant surprise with which she would be enabled to greet her husband, on his return from his long and toilsome journeyings. These sisterly communings were frequently exchanged, and it was their chief solace during their long separation from their husbands. It seemed as if they were two plants, expanding with the same promise, and likely to put forth their blossoms at the same season.

“In all considerable mercantile families, it will happen, now and then, that an individual member of it turns out to be unsuccessful in his enterprises, and therefore reduced to become in some degree a hanger-on and dependent upon the bounty of the more affluent branches. It was so with Theodoric Arathoon, a fraternal nephew of Jacob. The work of his hand seemed never to prosper. And there are persons, to whom it would perhaps be unjust to impute misconduct, who have an especial aptitude for being unfortunate. Let

them sail on what tack they will, they make no way. The current, that bears others gallantly along, stagnates the moment their little bark tempts it: the gale slumbers, and their canvas flutters into rags. Theodoric was the probable heir, by the Armenian rule of succession, of his uncle Jacob's wealth. It was, therefore, to his heart's content that Doriclea remained so long childless. Each succeeding year increased his satisfaction, and lulled him in those delightful day-dreams, which they are in the habit of indulging who set their affections upon the possessions of another. His Armenian neighbours, indeed, took a pleasure occasionally in humbling his expectations, pretending to discover from time to time an enlargement in Doriclea's figure. 'I will take a respondentia bond on the freight,' said one. 'I will ensure the safe delivery of the cargo after a nine-months' voyage,' said another. Theodoric's face expanded or fell with these hopes and alarms, for the fever of covetousness has its cold and hot fits without intermission. In a word, it is difficult to describe the wakeful, lingering solicitude with which he watched the countenance and the waist of Doriclea. If she yawned, sneezed, or hiccupped, she sounded the knell of his hopes.

“What, then, were the emotions of dread, hor-

ror, and suspicion, with which he heard the unwelcome tidings of Doriclea's pregnancy! 'I have most agreeable news for you,' said Jacob to his nephew, taking him aside to a pleasant seat on the roof of his house, which faced the sea-breeze. 'I'll be sworn,' said Theodoric, rubbing his hands, 'if it is not the return voyage of the punjums sent to Point de Galle, in which my uncle was good enough to give me a third of the venture.' But he changed his tone as Jacob, filling him a bumper of the acidulated beverage called claret, with which the Danes were formerly, during hostilities with France, kind enough to supply the Indian settlements, exclaimed, 'Theodoric, my boy, all my hopes are fulfilled: your aunt is pregnant, and probably the next intelligence we shall get from her will be that of her safe delivery.' Theodoric, indeed, swallowed the bumper, but Jacob's announcement gave it a nausea not its own, and stammering a word or two of feigned sympathy in his uncle's pride of paternity, he rushed down the stairs. 'Ah,' said Jacob, 'this Danish wine, though at two rupees the half dozen, is sad trash; but we must put up with it. Were I to send for a case of English claret from Hope and Card's, my creditors would take the alarm, and would think I was rushing to my ruin. Yet I see it has choked

the poor lad—and it is bad enough to choke the devil.’

“Theodoric was, indeed, choked, but it was with spite and disappointment, and a few more of those agreeable sensations we experience when the wire-drawn calculations of our avarice are snapt asunder. ‘Fool that I was!’ said he, stamping with rage; ‘why was I not beforehand with the archbishop to procure his prayers to avert from Doriclea the pangs and perils of child-birth? But stop—there may be some trick. This voyage—this pregnancy so well-timed. My life on it, it is all to procure some surreptitious child to palm upon Jacob at her return. Could she have a better associate in so vile an intrigue than Johanna, who, I well know, has served her apprenticeship to all the tricks of her sex?’ Thus reasoned the half-witted and mercenary Theodoric.

“In every part of the East, whether amongst Hindoos, Mussulmans, Armenians, or Catholics, there are wise men, who, whilst they themselves are starving, can predict plenty and good fortune to their neighbours. Amongst the Armenians, judicial astrology has always been held in estimation. To one of these persons, who was not too well fed to commune with the stars,—for they say it is a science which can only be attained by an abstemious

diet,—Theodoric had frequent recourse, when he wished any peculiar problem of his destiny to be solved. After three nights' watching and consultation of the planets, and a donation of thirty rupees, Padré Joseph gave him what he was pleased to call a definite answer to the question propounded to him—‘whether the heir, which Doriclea had given his uncle Jacob reason to expect in due season, would be genuine or suppositious?’ Old Joseph's response, preceded by the usual allowance of mystical jargon, went to this effect:—that Doriclea would produce a real heir, but that she would rear and nurture a fictitious one, who would inherit Jacob's wealth, unless some event, half-shadowed forth, half-veiled in the gloom of futurity, should intervene. Being pressed by Theodoric to point out that event more definitely, he shook his head, and became still more obscure and mystical. ‘He is a goose,’ said Theodoric, ‘and talks nonsense.’

“A bright idea flashed suddenly across the confused brain of Theodoric. ‘I myself may as well be on the spot, if any trick is meditated, and thus baffle the conspirators.’ He had mercantile dealings at Batavia, and in different places on the coast of Sumatra. Determined to watch over Doriclea's proceedings, he freighted a small junk to Point de Galle, and went on board. When he was out at

sea, he steered direct towards Batavia; and having long carried on an intercourse of a somewhat tender nature with a Dutch widow, with whom he always lodged when he visited that settlement, in fourteen days Theodoric found himself comfortably lodged with Dame Wilhelmina Jansen, whose house, at least according to Dutch taste, was picturesquely situated on the banks of a stagnant dyke, that formed an outlet to one of the larger canals which intersect that salubrious city. It was, however, retired, and,—but for a full orchestra of frogs, that croaked the whole night long,—quiet, and out of all noise and bustle. In this seclusion, it was Theodoric's plan to lie *perdu* for awhile, and await the turning-up of the cards.

“ It was as if Doriclea and Johanna were running a race of parturition. At length, the fulness of time arrived to the former, who was safely delivered of a fine boy, two or three days after Theodoric's arrival. To the joy of the parents and the gossips, the child was born with the sign of a cross below his right bosom; an omen of which their superstition made much, and their desire to flatter Doriclea more.

“ Theodoric was wont, in the dusk and coolness of the evening, to wander near Johanna's residence, whose beautiful gardens, laid out with the regularity

of dishes set on table, according to the plan of a cookery-book, communicated with the Stermbröek, a public walk much frequented. He had already twice seen Doriclea from the upper verandah, when she came out to enjoy the cool breeze of the evening; and her size and appearance were death to his hopes. On the fourth night he was on the same spot, but Doriclea was not to be seen: she had, indeed, been brought to bed on the morning of that day. Was it the devil, or the bad passions, which are his agents and brokers on earth, that urged Theodoric onwards?—for he crept along till he came to the flight of steps that led to the upper apartments of the mansion. He was proceeding to mount them, but his foot stumbled on something which, whether alive or dead, uttered a sort of grunt, and remained motionless as before. It threw Theodoric, however, on his head, which received a pretty strong contusion from the fall. But he had no sooner reached the top of the steps, than he perceived the window of an apartment wide open, and no person present but an infant in its cot:—it was Doriclea's, wrapt in the 'sweet sleep of careless infancy.' In an instant he was in the room. The child was naked, and only protected by a gauze curtain from the musquitoes. He tore away the curtain, took the child in his arms, and hastily

withdrew with it through the garden, and along the public walks, till he reached the widow Jansen's.'

"It was singular that an infant, whose life was so precious, should have been left so unguardedly. But the Dutch vrow, who assisted Doriclea in the care of her child, trusting to the soundness of its slumbers, had stolen away to console herself with a glass or two of Batavian scheidam, which, to females of that description, has charms beyond the enchantment of Circe, and unwilling to disturb the slumbers of the new-born babe, or perhaps unable to mount a steep flight of steps, had quietly composed herself to rest at the bottom; and this was the half-lifeless lump over which Theodoric had stumbled. But what had become of Doriclea herself? So curiously strung had been the series of accidents, that only a quarter of an hour before, Doriclea, who, as is usual with lying-in women in that climate, had quite regained her strength, had been called in to minister her sisterly aid to Johanna, who had produced, without medical aid, a fine girl, and was now, by the joint efforts of Doriclea and a confidential Malay nurse, in a state of apparent repose.

"But what was Doriclea's horror, when she returned to her babe and found its cot empty, its curtain torn, the window wide open, and the Dutch

woman absent from her charge ! Instantaneously, the appalling conviction darted on her mind, that her child had been carried away and devoured by the jackals who infested the gardens at night-fall : and this dreadful conviction received confirmation from the mosquito-curtain, which bore the marks of having been violently torn. Faint from her recent sufferings, and half-dead with terror and affright, she ran to Johanna, to whom she sobbed out her sorrows, not forgetting the wretchedness poor Jacob would have to sustain on so sad a failure of his long-cherished hopes. Johanna heard her, it is true, but she was again in pain, for she had just been delivered of a second child. A few minutes gave her ease, and the Malay woman having administered a restorative, Johanna anxiously inquired whether it was a boy ? ‘ It is,’ replied the nurse. ‘ Thank God !’ faintly exclaimed Johanna. No sooner was she gently placed on her cot, than a whispering in the Malay language, which lasted for some minutes, took place between them. ‘ I will repair your loss,’ said she to her sister. ‘ You know that twins are hateful to our husbands. You have lost your boy, exposed by that wicked Dutch woman to the jackals who infest the island. Be discreet and silent. On the pledged faith of a Malay slave you may safely rely. Keep your own secret,

and she will never divulge it. Even torture would not extort it from her. Take the child, as soon as Pankara has dressed it ; place it in your child's cot, and your Dutch nurse will not perceive the difference.'

" The plan was as notably executed as it was conceived. The little substitute, whether imagination busied herself in this as on all occasions, or whether there is a general similitude of all recently-born children to one another, appeared the exact copy of his cousin, who had, it was supposed, furnished a *bon morceau* to some epicure of a jackal. The Dutch vrow, after a few hours of that swinish sleep which the joint influence of Batavian fogs and Batavian scheidam had engendered, returned to her charge, and was only mildly reproved by Doriclea for her neglect. But on the following morning, as she washed the infant, to her great surprise, she missed the sign of the cross on its body : that sacred symbol of the divine protection obtained for it by the arch-pontiff's intercession with the saints. She invoked all the saints of the calendar whose names she knew, and many whose names she had forgot. A fit of remorse came over her. ' My neglect in leaving the child has been visited,' she cried, ' with this affliction. Whilst I was drinking that accursed scheidam—yet six

glasses of good liquor are no such great offence—the devil stole it and effaced the mark. See where his breath has singed the musquito-curtain, or his claws have torn it, to get at the poor innocent creature. But God's will be done! My mistress may not observe it for some days, and it will be easy to persuade her that the mark has disappeared naturally.' In truth, Doriclea herself observed a profound silence respecting the mark. She nurtured the infant at her bosom; and so powerful is the charm of helplessness and infancy, that the tide of those natural affections, which had been violently checked by the loss of her own, flowed exuberantly upon the child of her sister, till, by degrees, her regrets for the fruit of her own womb subsided in the kindly caresses which she lavished on the opening beauties of his little cousin. Jacob, she knew, would not hear a syllable of the accident. The secret was locked up in the confidential breast of Johanna, and the fidelity of a Malay, to whom a secret has been once confided, is for ever inviolable.

“ In the meanwhile, Theodoric had arrived at the widow Jansen's with the lineal heir of Jacob's wealth; and, strange to say, half-witted as Theodoric was, and was generally esteemed, he had influence enough with Dame Wilhelmina to win her over to the projects of his avarice. But the beauty

of the child, and the mark of the cross on its bosom, moved at once the compassion and the superstition of a nature not deeply depraved. ‘ You have done wrong, Theodoric,’ she said ; ‘ but it is too late to retrace it. We will wait to see what bustle the matter will raise amongst the burgo-masters. I will give out, for the present, that one of my lodgers was lately delivered of an infant, which she confided to my care, for reasons requiring the strictest concealment.’ Theodoric acquiesced in her suggestions, and Wilhelmina found a Malay woman on whose punctilious secresy in domestic matters she could rely, and who, having lately lost her own child, nurtured the little stranger at her bosom.

“ It does not clearly appear what Theodoric’s intentions were in the abduction of Doriclea’s infant. Wilhelmina was, however, no party to them. She had sympathized, it is true, in her lover’s disappointment, as she had probably participated in his hopes, and was, therefore, unwilling to betray him. It is most likely he had been prompted to the act by the facilities of executing it. But after several days, they were not a little puzzled to find that the affair made no noise and excited no inquiry. He went to the town-hall, expecting of course to hear that the magistrates were labouring with all their might, and exercising all their wits, to discover

the place where the lost child was concealed, and to bring the offending parties to justice. But he found them half asleep, hearing a cause, over which they had already slept several hours, between two fish-women, as to the lawful boundaries of their stalls, one of which had infringed, it was alleged, several inches on the local rights of the other. In short, the whole affair seemed hushed in oblivion. At night-fall, he wandered through Johanna's garden, and anxious to solve the mystery, cautiously stole up the marble steps that led to the room whence he had stolen the babe. He found the window closed, but by a light that was burning there, observed Doriclea herself hanging tenderly over an infant stretched out in the same cot from which he had torn the helpless victim of his avarice. Could it be? Was it a dream? He rubbed his eyes, but not a symptom of lamentation was to be seen. On the contrary, she manifested no feelings but those belonging to joy and hope, and the gentle tribe of the maternal affections, Could it be Johanna's infant on which she lavished by proxy the overflowings of a fondness from which her own had been torn? No; for at that moment Johanna herself entered, with her little girl in her arms. It was strange, and whilst it baffled the heavy intellect of Theodoric, it eluded the acuter faculties of the widow.

“Doriclea, in a few weeks, returned with the little Alexis (for so he had been named) to Madras. Jacob greeted their arrival with festivities that dipped deeply into his pocket. Nay, it is computed that the dinner he gave on that happy occasion to the Armenian merchants, including a fresh assortment of Danish claret that had come to his hands in part payment of a bad debt, did not stand him in less than half a rupee and some fanams per head. Nor were the Arathoon family astonished, in the course of a year or two, on hearing that Theodoric had married Dame Jansen, who had consented to enter the Armenian communion. In the third year, Theodoric returned to Madras with his little vessel, freighted with a profitable cargo of gold dust from Ava, and elephants’ teeth from Ceylon, his spouse, and the little Petrus, their supposed progeny. They were all well received, for Theodoric had made a profitable trip, and the world, one’s relatives in particular, are sure to be on good terms with him who is on good terms with fortune.

“And now,” said the barrister, “I must request you to leap over in imagination a few years, a leap which,

In the quick forge and working-house of thought,

is no difficult matter. Johanna's husband, Joseph Moorat, with Johanna and her little daughter, were now established at Madras. Doriclea died, after a short illness; and Theodoric, who had purchased a larger vessel, by carrying on a gainful traffic to the Eastern Archipelago, and the coasts of Ava and Cochin China, seemed disposed to redeem his former errors, and subside into a thriving and industrious merchant. As his voyages were long and desultory, and his business rendered it necessary for him to remain a long time at the different ports he touched at, Wilhelmina and Petrus generally accompanied him in his voyage. Time, that makes no halt, had now conducted the latter to that stage, in which youth blossoms into manhood. There was another of these coeval plants that was ripening also;—Christina Moorat, the beautiful daughter of Johanna. At this early period of her life, the successive demises of both her parents placed her under Jacob's guardianship. She was the only Armenian that for many Armenian generations had the faintest pretensions to be called beautiful, for Armenian women have a prescriptive privilege to be ugly. Her complexion was of an intermediate tint between Persian and European. Her dark eyes, half-veiled by long and dark lashes, spoke

all the changeful emotions of her heart ; but each of those emotions was worthy to inhabit a bosom pure as a temple dedicated to virtue. Alexis and Christina were companions from infancy, and their childish attachment put forth affections befitting riper years. The parents of each encouraged their growth, seeing that, at no distant period, the wealth of Jacob Arathoon and of Joseph Moorat, of which the former was the sole trustee, would be concentrated by their union.

“ Yet the current of true love, if such deserves the name, runs not always smooth even amongst Armenians. I hinted just now, that Alexis and Petrus resembled each other in early infancy. But they grew up into a similitude so exact, that, had it not been for some distinction of dress, and to nice observers some difference of intonation in their voices,—that of Alexis being more soft and feminine,—they would have been constantly taken for each other. Thirty witnesses, beneath whose eyes they had grown up, swore that they had frequently been led into the most awkward mistakes by reason of the exact correspondence between them. There was, indeed, one mark impressed by the hand of nature,—the cross on the body of Petrus,—but it was concealed from observation with the utmost care and circumspection,

Now Theodoric, well knowing that nature frowned upon the meditated union of Alexis and Christina, knew equally well that Petrus had cherished for his fair cousin a sentiment not quite so cold and fraternal as that of Alexis. The truth is, Alexis wooed her, if he wooed her at all, after a fashion that was not exactly to her fancy. She had reached the age at which the fervid homage of a lover, who dreads as much as he hopes, is more welcome than the confidence of a suitor who, imagining himself sure of success, takes no pains to deserve it: whereas Petrus, though his intercourse with her had been restricted, loved his cousin with idolatry. He was, indeed, stung to the quick by the advantage Alexis had over him in the competition for her favour; and when he reflected that in a short time he was to accompany Theodoric on one of his long voyages, he shrunk with horror at what might happen in his absence. But his father, naturally entering into his views, and participating his feelings, bade him be of good cheer, assuring him that the marriage of Alexis and Christina was not likely to be speedily solemnized, for that Jacob, who was too tenacious of his own money, as well as Joseph Moorat's, to part with a rupee of it in his life-time, would contrive to put it off from year to year, so long as he could invent a plausible excuse

for doing so. Yet every body saw that Petrus loved her. Jacob consulted some sage friends on the subject, and they agreed that it was unwise to afford Petrus any opportunity whatsoever of communicating his sentiments to Christina. In a country where the females live in complete seclusion, this is quite practicable; for lady's maids, moonlight assignations, billet-doux slyly conveyed to the toilette, in a word, all the elegant plottings, by which parental prohibitions are made a dead letter with us, are happily unknown to the Armenians.

“It was a cruel discouragement to the poor lad to be permitted to see her only by stealth, or at church, when a long Armenian veil, the most hideous thing imaginable in the eyes of a lover, concealed every feature of her face. But Petrus was determined to see her before the long-dreaded voyage should separate him from her—perhaps for ever. I have already mentioned the almost exact personal resemblance of Alexis and Petrus. It was so close, in every respect, that the church synod, who kindly trouble themselves with private as well as ecclesiastical affairs amongst the Armenians, enjoined them, under the pain of severe censures, not to appear in habits of the same colour, lest they might take advantage of each other, or of strangers, in matters of right or contract. Petrus was

enjoined to wear a blue vest ; and Alexis's colour was a dark brown.

“ Petrus had learned that Alexis, (who, having every thing his own way in courtship, began to think it a dull business, which might be seasoned with a little variety,) had one evening accepted an invitation to a grand Hindoo nautch ; and just as he supposed him immersed in the delights of that lively amusement, the firing of guns, and explosion of rockets, and the noises which, under the name of music, tear the drum of the ear into tatters—he assumed a dress in colour and fashion the exact fac-simile of that worn by Alexis, and marched without constraint into the hall of Jacob's house, where that wealthy Armenian was enjoying the fumes of his hookah, and Christina receiving lessons in chess from a brahmin.

“ ‘ Alexis !’ said Jacob, ‘ you are a sensible fellow. I thought you would soon be sick of that stupid nautch.’ Christina, who did not expect her lover, having had, if the truth must be told, enough of his heavy indolent conversation in the morning, exclaimed, somewhat pettishly,—‘ What, back so soon, Alexis? You, too, that are so fond of nautches !’ The brahmin glided slowly away, and Petrus and Christina began to pace the verandah without saying a word. She was not surprised

at his silence, for Alexis had few topics on which he could converse. At last, Petrus, bursting with impatience, took courage, and imitating the effeminate tones of Alexis, ‘Charming Christina!’ he said, and at the same moment seized her hand and pressed it to his lips. ‘Bless me,’ said Christina to herself, ‘what is to come next? He never paid me a compliment before; and as for my hand, I am sure he never touched it but by accident. What can it mean?’

“ ‘Christina,’ said Petrus, ‘do you love me?’
‘Yes; at least I understand so from my father,’ replied Christina.—‘And when shall we be married?’
‘Why, when my father pleases: it is no affair of mine.’—‘And can you be so indifferent, lovely girl, to that which is to fix the colour of your life for ever—your happiness?’ ‘Happiness!’ interrupted Christina, ‘I am quite happy, Alexis, as I am. But why this impatience all on a sudden? You said nothing about it this morning. If you are so anxious, I will ask my father to let us be married to-morrow.’—‘Hush, hush!’ said Petrus. ‘Only swear you will be mine.’ ‘Swear it, Alexis! why it was settled long ago,—so long that I have ceased to think of it.’ Much of this converse passed between them. It increased in tenderness every minute. Christina was delighted at the happy change

that love (for love only could have wrought it) had effected in Alexis. ‘These compliments,’ she said inwardly, ‘never fell from his lips before; but surely they become him much better than the dull, lifeless chat he is so wont to indulge in.’ And a new world of thought, of sentiment, of action, from that hour dawned upon her. The interview ended in a solemn exchange of pledges. ‘I swear,’ said Christina, as his trembling hands tied a triple Ceylon chain of gold around her neck,—a delicate office for a lover’s hands, and liable to some trifling mistakes,—‘I swear never to become the wife but of him who placed this chain on my neck. When he says, *Christina, I reclaim that chain*, at that moment I will be his.’—‘More, more,’ cried the enraptured Petrus, unfolding his tunic and displaying the cross which nature had stamped upon his bosom; ‘Swear never to be his, who does not claim you by that holy symbol.’ ‘I swear,’ responded Christina. The scene sank deep into the soul of that simple-hearted creature. Alexis was transformed into an angel. His speech, his look, his voice, for the first time, were eloquent. It was the first lesson of love Christina had yet received. The next morning, she longed for the hour when her tutor, as she thought, would make his appearance. She was

impatient for another lecture, as interesting, as instructive, as impressive, as the last.

“At his usual hour the next morning, Alexis strutted into her apartment, and, worn out probably by the nauch of the preceding evening, threw himself upon the ottoman close by her side with a loud yawn, which he gave himself no trouble to suppress. A yawn is at all times the knell of love. It would have been so at this, but for the pleasing remembrance of the recent interview which had ever since engrossed every thought and feeling of Christina. ‘This is an unaccountable change that has come over him,’ she thought: ‘but his eyes are red; like myself, he was unable to sleep for thinking of the delightful converse of the evening before.’

“She was all amazement to perceive that he relapsed into the same uninteresting Alexis as before;—he who had the power, had he but the inclination, to be truly delightful. He did not even deal in those idle nothings to which love gives an emphasis and a meaning. ‘This must be affectation,’ she thought, ‘or else last night he was playing a part to deceive me. Fool that I was, to think him sincere when he praised my beauty, and extorted from me that sacred pledge of fidelity—that oath

which I cannot, alas, recall. Yet, had he remained the same as he was yesterday morning, instead of playing the agreeable so well as he did last night, I should not have been disgusted with the contrast. Would to heaven that I may never see him again, unless it is in one of those fits of pleasing he knows so well how to assume !' These embarrassing thoughts passed rapidly through her mind. At length, after an hour's tedious conference of yawns and monosyllables, her lover relieved her of his society, leaving her lost in conjecture and distracted with uncertainty. Thus every thing seemed inauspicious to the delectable family alliance which Jacob had meditated, though in all probability intending to postpone it year after year, at least till he was actually on his death-bed, and was convinced he could not carry away his money with him.

“ Petrus found, in his supposed father, Theodoric, an active coadjutor in his intrigue ; for Theodoric, though half-witted, could think upon a small scale, and was an excellent hand in petty stratagems. Charmed with his blissful interview with Christina, he watched night and day for another ; but Alexis was eternally at her heels, creeping about like a cat, and holding with her the same kind of quiet intercourse which that

animal holds with those who tolerate her society. At length a scheme was devised, which promised the opportunity so anxiously expected. ‘Cousin,’ said Theodoric one morning to Alexis, ‘you have never been on board my little vessel. She is just fitted out for her voyage—she is a tight boat, and I should like, before she sails, to have your opinion of her.’ ‘With all my heart,’ said the unsuspecting Alexis; and in a few minutes a masulah boat brought them alongside of the good ship *Wilhelmina*. The good dame herself, after whom she had been christened, did the honours of the little cabin; and Theodoric, knowing that Alexis liked a bottle of wine from his heart, when he could find something that better deserved the name than Jacob’s Danish claret, plied him after a good dinner with successive bumpers, sung him his most pleasant songs, and in a short time reduced him to that enviable state, which rendered it necessary to provide him a berth for the night.

“Petrus, therefore, again assumed the garb of Alexis, and found an access to Christina as easily as on the former occasion. ‘Walk up to Christina, friend Alexis; walk up,’ said Jacob; and Petrus entered her apartment. Not a moment of that precious interval was lost. But he pressed his suit with an ardour so little befitting the character or

manner of Alexis, that Christina, who had been already staggered at the strange contrariety which Alexis had exhibited—now a heavy, tiresome companion—at another time an enthusiastic, impassioned lover—soon came to the conclusion that it was Petrus, in the garb of Alexis, who was discoursing so pleasantly with her. Her mild exposition with Petrus, for his breach of faith, implied more than forgiveness. Petrus staid late at Jacob's that evening, well knowing that Alexis was snugly disposed of; and took care to ingratiate himself with old Jacob by listening to his stories, and quoting every maxim of worldly cunning and commercial thrift his memory could furnish. 'The boy,' said Jacob, 'is wonderfully improved by courtship. He is worthy of Christina in every respect, and the sooner they are married the better.' Petrus read his thoughts, and knowing the advantage of hammering whilst the iron was hot, urged him, as soon as Christina retired, to consent to their immediate union. 'Well, well,' replied Jacob, 'there's no hurry; but if two thousand five hundred pagodas, which is nearly eight thousand Arcot rupees, will be enough at starting, marry, by all means, to-morrow.' 'I care not for money,' returned Petrus, in rapture; 'give me your consent in writing, and I will leave the rest to your gene-

rosity.' 'Sensible fellow,' muttered Jacob; and handing him paper, pen, and ink, 'write,' said he, 'what you wish me to sign; but mind the obligation to pay in money must not be for more than the sum I specified.' Petrus accordingly wrote the obligation, being simply a promise to pay him, *Petrus Arathoon*, 2,500 pagodas, in consideration of his marriage with Christina Moorat, daughter of the late Joseph Moorat, he, the said Jacob, being the sole trustee of the will of the said Joseph, and guardian of the said Christina; and Jacob, having read the document hastily over, that part excepted which related to the money (and this he coned backwards and forwards), cheerfully signed it. Had Petrus inserted one fanam beyond the stipulated sum, the whole plot would have been defeated.

"Petrus relied upon the joint ingenuity of Theodoric and Wilhelmina to find some pretext for detaining Alexis for two days at least. He would have been safe had he calculated on as many months; for at night, whilst Alexis was snoring in his cot, the anchor was heaved, and the ship, already in trim for her voyage, stood out to sea towards Ceylon, her first port of destination. The next morning, Petrus led his blushing bride (all brides blush on these occasions) to the altar of the

Armenian church, gave the written contract to the priest, who luckily mumbled over the service in a tone and manner which rendered it impossible for Jacob, or his Armenian friends assembled on the occasion, to hear the names of either party. In short, Petrus Arathoon was married to Christina Moorat.

“What was the astonishment of Alexis, when, tumbling out of his cot the following morning, and hastening upon deck, he perceived the ship under an easy sail of six or seven knots, and Madras and its white range of buildings no longer visible! ‘Eh, what is all this?’ he exclaimed to Theodoric. ‘Where’s Madras? Where’s Jacob Arathoon’s house? I don’t see the flag-staff. Bless me, if the ship is not sailing!’ ‘Sailing! to be sure she is, or we should make but an indifferent trip of it. With the blessing of St. Honorius, I hope to run forty leagues by the log before to-morrow noon,’ rejoined Theodoric. ‘Trip—forty leagues—why, where the devil are you going to take me?’ half-screamed the panic-struck Alexis. ‘Take you! why you are still dreaming. Come, come, Petrus, rub your eyes, and bestir yourself yarely. We want your help in the orlop-deck. She dips a little at the bowsprit, and we must shift the rice and the piece-goods a little more aft,’

continued the other, but in a tone somewhat more authoritative than was to Alexis' liking. But he must be indeed dreaming, he thought, for Theodoric called him *Petrus*. 'Petrus!' said he, half-blubbering, 'Petrus! my name is Alexis—you have kidnapped me—I must go home to Jacob and Christina—I have never been absent so long.' 'Fie, Petrus! you, that have been so many trips, to pout like a lubber, as if you were never to see land again! Come, Petrus, down the orlop, make haste.' 'Petrus, again! I tell you I am Alexis; and was I not ordered to wear a dark-brown dress and Petrus a blue one?' At that moment, he glanced at the sleeve of his tunic, and to his amazement it was of dark brown—the very garment worn by Petrus; for Theodoric, before Alexis was awake, had removed his dress, and placed ready for him one in which Petrus was usually habited.

“ In short, the fear of the rope's-end and of Theodoric's authority had, in a few days, gone nigh to persuade poor Alexis that he was Petrus in good earnest, or, at least, that nothing was to be gained by grumbling or resistance. So that, making due allowance for the awkwardness of a first voyage, Alexis became almost as expert as Petrus in handing a rope or running up

aloft. Besides, Alexis relished Dame Wilhelmina's cookery of all things ; being much more palatable than the insipid cabaubs and curries of Jacob, or the pillaws which, in quality of agent to the nabob, were sent him from Chepauk palace *gratuitously* : a matter which rendered them peculiarly agreeable to Jacob's parsimonious palate. He could not, however, help missing Christina—her on whom he had been so long in the habit of 'bestowing his tediousness,' morn and evening. He solaced himself, however, when he recollected what long stories he should have to tell her of the different places he touched at ;—and as for the shameful conduct of Theodoric, he should have complete revenge by informing Jacob of it, for he knew that Theodoric stood in great awe of the head of his family. Such were the expectations of Alexis. They were not destined to be realized.

“ Within three months after her departure, the good ship *Wilhelmina*, burthen eighty tons, Theodoric Arathoon commander, anchored again in Madras roads, and no sooner was the first masulah boat alongside, than Alexis was for jumping into her. ‘Why in such a hurry, Petrus?’ exclaimed Theodoric. ‘Remain on board, sir ; the ship's duties must not be neglected ;’ and Dame Wilhelmina having been already lowered into the

boat, he followed, leaving the mortified Alexis in the ship. The poor fellow was in despair. He was within a cable's length or two of the custom-house, and the line of white buildings, presenting so agreeable a picture to the eye which has had nothing to look at so long but sky and ocean; and with the help of a glass, he could make out the upper verandah of old Jacob's house—that very verandah where he had sauntered for hours by the side of Christina. Was he deceived, or did he not discern Christina herself, certainly a form of her size and figure, in close converse with a man, on whose arm she leaned with apparent fondness! And this was the first symptom of jealousy which had ruffled the stagnated surface of Alexis' affection for Christina. He paced the deck in a state of extreme agitation, resolved to terminate his sufferings by throwing himself into the sea. On looking, however, over the ship's side, just as he had arrived at that sad determination, he perceived a large ruffian-like-looking shark, ready to receive him within his monstrous jaws the moment he should execute it. He thought it more eligible, therefore, to remain on board, hoping to find an opportunity to get on shore, and run as fast as he could to Jacob's.

“Nor was it long before the opportunity pre-

sented itself. A boat laden with vegetables had come astern, and just as she pushed off, Alexis, being an active youth, lowered himself into her, and actually passed the outer surf before he was missed from deck. The moment he landed, he ran to Jacob's house, mounted the chunam steps, every stain and crack of which was familiar to him, and entered the well-known saloon, where old Jacob, Christina, and Petrus were seated at dinner. He perceived the well-remembered fumes of the Chepauk pillaw,—into which the nabob's purveyor (compedoor) was suspected occasionally, when fowls were scarce, of interpolating a cat, by way of substitute;—and, after Wilhelmina's savoury viands, it was enough to turn his stomach. It was, however, his home; the place where he had been nurtured and kindly treated from childhood; and he hastened towards the old gentleman, with a fond but complaining look, to recapitulate his wrongs and to be soothed by his sympathy. The moment he saw him, Jacob rose indignantly from his chair. 'What, Petrus,' said he, 'did I not tell you that Christina was not to be persecuted with your addresses?' Jacob's faculties were now becoming somewhat dim; but suddenly recollecting himself, 'Oh, I had forgot—Christina is married to Alexis.'—'Sir!' said Alexis, quite astounded at

his reception, ‘ I am not Petrus, but Alexis ; and it is I who am to be married to Christina, begging your pardon, sir.’ Here the real Petrus affected a stare of astonishment at the impudence of the supposed Petrus ; a farce which was played with great effect for some minutes, till old Jacob, incensed at hearing Alexis persist in not being Petrus, and not knowing what to make of his gabble about Theodoric’s having inveigled him to sea, came to the readiest inference that offered itself, namely, that Petrus was drunk, and that it was best to send him home to Theodoric’s, under the care of a stout Portuguese servant, who instantly obeyed the order, by laying hold of Alexis by the arm to support him down the steps.

“ Were not all the demons of ill let loose upon the unfortunate Alexis ? He had not proceeded many paces with his Portuguese attendant, who, being convinced that he was drunk, would not quit hold of him, before an officer of the Mayor’s Court, followed by his peons, asked the Portuguese, whether it was not Mr. Petrus Arathoon he was conducting ? ‘ Yes,’ said the Portuguese, ‘ it is young Master Petrus ; but he is quite drunk—what do you want with him ?’—‘ Oh, nothing but to arrest him at the suit of one Jonathan Paul, of the American ship *Betsey*, for a thousand star pagodas,’ re-

plied the bailiff. ‘Let me see; aye, it’s all right, according to my instructions—Petrus Arathoon—tall—dark eyes—dressed in a blue Armenian garb.’ Alexis, as soon as he could understand the business, began explaining to the man the error he had committed. ‘My friend,’ said he, ‘you have mistaken the person. My name is Alexis, not Petrus Arathoon. The person you want is now at Jacob Arathoon’s. Arrest me at your peril!’ Be it so,’ said the officer; ‘come, you are sober enough; walk away with me:’ and Alexis was in a few minutes lodged in the debtors’ gaol of Madras.

“And it happened, by a singular fatality, that Petrus, during his last voyage, deeming that he might make a considerable profit by a venture in pearls, had become bound in that sum to an American captain, who had supplied him with the commodity, taking care to avail himself of Petrus’s inexperience to outwit him in the bargain. The enterprize was unsuccessful, and Petrus, not daring to mention it to Theodoric, relied upon the forthcoming sum stipulated to be paid by Jacob on the day of his marriage. But the money obstinately adhered to Jacob’s chest. ‘What can the lad want with so much cash?’ said the old Armenian, ‘with a good house over his head, and an excellent dinner every day served up to him, all free of expense

and such pillaws from his highness the Omrud ul Dowlah !' The American, therefore, finding the money not forthcoming, adopted that harsh measure, which, as I have mentioned, fell on the head of poor Alexis. Petrus, however, not being destitute of honourable feelings, and probably touched with some little compunction for the trick played upon his cousin, to which he would not perhaps have become a party but for his attachment to Christina, contrived to get bail put in to liberate the wretched Alexis, thus compelled to personate a character that did not belong to him; and Alexis, having no other home, skulked to Theodoric's, to whom he narrated his grievances at full length.

"About this time, old Jacob departed this life, leaving, though sorely to his dissatisfaction, his immense property behind him. The Armenians seldom bequeath their possessions by will; because, by their law of succession, the eldest son inherits the whole, being bound to provide, according to a specific rule of distribution, for the rest of the survivors. But the estate of Joseph Moorat, which was not inconsiderable, was also in his hands, as trustee for Christina, his sole heiress in default of male issue; so that Theodoric, who expected to be allowed at least the luxury of handling and turning over that magnificent heap of wealth, having acted

as Petrus's father from his earliest years, and by his instrumentality contrived to place him in his present enviable condition, rubbed his hands with ecstasy. ' 'Tis true,' said he, ' Petrus is Jacob's lawful son, but who Alexis is, and how Doriclea procured him when she lost her own, is no business of mine. I have eased my conscience by the contrivance which has made Petrus the inheritor of the property that is rightfully his, and thus intercepted it from an alien and stranger to his blood.' And he bewildered himself in some delicious dreams of the immense profits he would realize as soon as he could finger a part of the hoards of Jacob Arathoon and Joseph Moorat, and thus extend his resources far beyond those of the richest merchant of Madras. But Theodoric's calculations were baffled.

Alexis, though his understanding had become inert from having so long been brought up as a sort of pet animal in Jacob's house, during which time he had exercised no faculties but those of eating, drinking, and sleeping, began to perceive that he was called on to rouse and bestir himself. Having proved, to his own satisfaction, that which Locke observes no man can prove to that of others—his own personal identity—that he was Alexis, not Petrus, by whom both his name and his rights had been usurped under the cloak of a resemblance,

which, in one of her maddest freaks, nature had created between them, he stated his case to Mr. Samuel, an acute practitioner in the Mayor's Court. There was the simplicity of truth in his statement, a probability and coherence in the circumstances, which the unpractised ingenuity of a youth like Alexis could not fabricate. The property was immense, and afforded sufficient chance of remuneration to put into motion one of the nimblest understandings in the profession. A bill was filed against Petrus (falsely called Alexis) Arathoon, and Theodoric, stating that Alexis, being the only son of Jacob and Doriclea Arathoon, both deceased, became entitled to all the property whereof Jacob died possessed, and that Petrus, the son of Theodoric and Wilhelmina Arathoon, by reason of a close resemblance between the said Alexis and the said Petrus, pretended to be Alexis, and under colour of such fraudulent pretext, claimed and was in the enjoyment of the whole estate left by the said Jacob, which by law had devolved on him, Alexis, the rightful heir of the said Jacob. There was a similar allegation respecting the property of the late Joseph Moorat, which was claimed by Alexis as the betrothed spouse of Christina, his daughter, such betrothment being valid as a marriage by the customs of the Armenians. The bill

called for a discovery of these facts, and an account of the sums belonging to the estate of Jacob, which had come into the hands of Petrus, and demanded a discovery from Theodoric of his having forcibly detained and inveigled on board ship the said Alexis, in order to afford his son Petrus the means of practising the fraud, by virtue of which he, the said Petrus, under the assumed name and character of Alexis, had become possessed of Jacob's estate, and had married, or pretended to have married, the said Christina, by which real or pretended marriage he had possessed himself, in her right, of the estate of Joseph Moorat, she, the said Christina, being the lawfully betrothed wife of the plaintiff. Moreover, an action was brought against Theodoric for an assault and false imprisonment, on board ship, during a certain voyage to and from Java and intermediate places, as the readiest mode of trying one of the issues, and determining the important question of the respective identities of the parties. Petrus, acting under Theodoric's influence, denied the allegations, and the causes came on for hearing, after a voluminous mass of depositions taken in the examiner's office.

“ The common-law question, as to the false imprisonment, came on collaterally with the suit in equity: it lasted several days. Thirty witnesses

swore to Alexis, whom they pointed out in court, having been brought up from his infancy by Jacob Arathoon as his son, having been born, as they understood, at Batavia, whence he was brought by his mother to Madras, when he was about two months old. They had known, conversed, and had dealings with him during that long period. For the defence, a still greater number swore that the plaintiff was not Alexis, but Petrus Arathoon, Theodoric's son, whom they had known from an early age, and they positively identified him as such in court; amongst these were several seamen and lascars who sailed with Alexis on his compulsory voyage, who positively swore that he was the same person who had sailed with them on two former voyages, that they had always addressed him as Petrus, Theodoric's son, and that they had never known him by any other name. The court, though long perplexed with so distressing a conflict of testimony, found for the plaintiff, with nominal damages, thus negating the hypothesis, that it was Petrus, and not Alexis, who had sailed on board Theodoric's vessel. Both Alexis and Petrus attended before the examiner, whose duty, according to the practice of that court, was to elicit *viva voce* evidence, and then reduce it to writing; the deposition of each witness being first read over to

him before he was sworn to its truth. Never was the fallacy of the human senses more strikingly illustrated. When one of them withdrew, the examiner himself was at a loss to designate him who remained. When they were together, some slight discrimination, but so shadowy and evanescent that the memory could not afterwards recall it, might be discerned. They both wore the same dress, and for want of that exterior symbol, the eye was a deceitful witness. But the cause was decided by a piece of evidence which, slight as it was, occasioned a preponderance in favour of Alexis, who was decreed the lawful heir of his father Jacob's estate, whilst the separate estate of Joseph Moorat was ordered to be paid into the hands of the master in equity, to abide the decision of the court, in its ecclesiastical jurisdiction, as to the validity of Petrus's marriage with Christina. The slight piece of evidence alluded to was the arrest of Alexis for the debt incurred by Petrus, and his liberation on bail, which was exonerated by Petrus himself, who paid the debt and costs. It was inferred that one of the adverse parties would not have taken upon himself to discharge a debt, unless he knew the demand to be a just one, and had been conscious of the consideration for which the bond was given, though he might have assisted the other in making

a defence to it. It is singular, however, that, up to this stage of the proceedings, the marriage-contract signed by Jacob, purporting to secure a sum of money to *Petrus*, in consideration of that marriage, was not brought to light. But as the priest, and every body officiating on that occasion, took it for granted that it was Alexis who was married to Christina, the document was thrown carelessly amongst other papers of the same description; it was never thought of till it became necessary to cite it in the ecclesiastical suit, when it was searched for, but could not be found. It is supposed that Theodoric had abstracted it when he foresaw that it might be pressed as a strong presumption against *Petrus*.

“ Alexis was thus placed in legal possession of his supposed father’s estate. The marriage was declared null;—but no judicial determination could annul Christina’s affection for *Petrus*, and the oath she had sworn by the holy symbol traced on his bosom, for she adhered with inflexible fidelity to his altered fortunes. With the money of Jacob, Alexis seemed to inherit no small portion of his avarice, except that, in the culinary department of his household, there was some little improvement. Years glided away, during which the Mayor’s Court was superseded by the new charter constitu-

ting of the Recorder. It was about this time that a Greek priest, who had left Madras on a visit to Constantinople before the death of Doriclea, returned to that settlement. He heard the particulars of this singular litigation with the utmost emotion. Doriclea had made a confession to him of the loss of her first-born, and its substitution by Johanna Moorat's offspring. The priest anticipating some perplexed question of paternity, had reduced her declaration to writing, in which she avowed, by the most solemn appeal to heaven, that the child who was born to her, and which she had unhappily lost, was marked on his right bosom with the sign of the cross. A ray of light, imperfect as it was, thus gleamed through the almost impenetrable obscurity of the case; some clue at least presented itself to unravel the mystery. Theodoric's death completed the development. His widow, Wilhelmina, touched with remorse for having participated in a fraud so injurious to the rights both of Alexis and Petrus, narrated to Mr. Samuel the whole history of the abduction, as well as the subsequent trick that had been played upon Alexis, and through the exertions of that skilful and intelligent practitioner, the cause was revived in the Recorder's Court, in which it pended nearly two years. The decree, in conformity to the facts, which

were strongly attested, re-invested in Petrus, as the son and heir of his deceased father, Jacob Arathoon, all the property whereof he died possessed; and declared Alexis entitled to the sum constituting the estate of his father, Joseph Moorat, subject to the provision to which Christina, the daughter of the said Joseph, was by the Armenian law entitled; a provision, however, which Petrus did not claim, for the parsimony of Alexis had augmented his patrimonial possessions at least two-fold. Petrus lived and died respected, the richest Armenian in India, and his property was distributed equitably amongst a numerous race of descendants.

REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD INDIAN OFFICER.

V.

UPON one occasion of visiting our entertaining friend, the colonel, we found him a little excited. The barrister asked whether he had met with Jeronymo again, or seen a ghost?

“By ——,” said he, beginning with his usual expletive; “I don’t know what to think. But listen. Last night, as I was about to leap into my cot, I found my place occupied by a slender, delicate, pretty-shaped *samp* (snake), who looked at me with prodigious coolness, as much as to say, “come here if you dare.” I just turned about for my sabre—there it is, as flexible as a rattan, and as keen as a razor—intending to make a crucial incision in the rascal—when he vanished; but where and how, hang me if I can tell. I was exceedingly puzzled to know how he got in or got out, seeing that there was no breach in the wall or floor practicable for him. I kept awake all night

meditating upon this strange affair. Mentioning it to my kitmudgar this morning, he recommended me to send for a sampoorí. I did so, and after this black fellow had piped a bit, making a strange fuss, out came my sleek-looking bed-fellow, as unconcerned as possible, and apparently on intimate terms with the sampoorí, for he let him handle him, and jumped as delightedly into his basket as a stickleback does into a boy's bottle."

"The same snake, colonel?"

"Ay, the very same. I could swear to every spot or streak upon his hide."

Our old friend continued for some time to enlarge upon this incident, and it led us insensibly into conversation upon the dexterity of the Indian *psylli*, and from thence we naturally came to speak of the jugglers, of whom, indeed, the sampoorís constitute a variety.

Every individual of our little party had some fact to relate, almost incredible to others, which he had witnessed with his "faithful eyes." Flowers and trees made to grow instantly, to vary their species, their blossoms, their fruit; metals transmuted before the sight from the basest to the most precious; animals mutilated, mangled, every spark of vitality extinguished, and forthwith restored to perfect being; men sitting upon nothing, mount-

ing into the air upon nothing, rolling unhurt amidst sharp spears, sabres, spikes, and knives; in short, there was scarcely an *impossible* thing, which some of us had not seen actually performed by the jugglers who frequent the Eastern courts, of whose extraordinary skill no idea can be formed by those who have merely witnessed the vulgar exploits of European conjurers.

The barrister, who referred all preternatural appearances to natural causes, took occasion to draw an argument from the dexterity of these jugglers in favour of the institution of castes. "You perceive," said he, "the vast accumulation of knowledge, for it is nothing more, which is acquired by the intellect of successive generations being constantly directed to the same object, instead of being diverted to others, as amongst us. These jugglers,—though we degrade them by such a denomination, I should rather say, these practical philosophers,—by confining their attention judiciously to one pursuit, have attained something like perfection in it; and I have little doubt that there are grounds for the assertion of the Sanchya philosophers, that mind may, by dint of thinking, become omnipotent over matter."

An old civilian, one of the colonel's intimates, but who had rarely happened to join our symposia,

here interposed. "I cannot concur in the notion you seem to entertain," said he, addressing himself to the barrister, "that the performances of these jugglers are the mere effects of skill on their part in practising deceptions upon us: I fear their art lies deeper than the superficial causes to which you attribute it."

"To what cause do you ascribe it?" enquired the barrister.

"To magic, undoubtedly."

"Magic! And what do you understand by magic?"

"Sorcery," replied the civilian.

"I have no other idea of magic, or even sorcery," said the barrister, "than that it is something done by sleight of hand; a quickness in cheating the senses, which are generally relied upon by mankind implicitly as the only criterion of what is offered to them; whereas, the senses are in truth easily deceived; and when their senses are deceived, vulgar minds become utterly hopeless; they have nothing to lean upon, and take refuge in superstition: just as a savage, when he sees for the first time the effect of gunpowder, thinks he is in the presence of a spirit."

"Sir," rejoined the civilian, "I am too old to unlearn the prejudices I imbibed from my Bible. If our common Christianity is true, there must be

wicked spirits in the universe, and I can conceive nothing more probable than that they should be ready, if permitted to do so, to lend their supernatural aid to those who are daring enough to purchase it, whereby devils may, to a certain extent, counterwork the designs of Providence, and thereby, for a time, promote their own ends."

"If we are to refer all the appearances for which we cannot satisfactorily account to diabolical agency," observed the barrister, "I fear the devils would have more business on their hands than they could well execute. What do you say to the various phenomena which philosophers cannot explain—gravitation, electricity, magnetism, and certain chemical effects, the causes of which have hitherto been latent?"

"I attribute them all," said the old civilian, with firmness, "to supernatural agency—to a beneficent power, where the operation is evidently for the good of man; to a malevolent power, where the operation is bad or even equivocal. And I beg of you, sir, to consider," he added, "that amongst the instances in which effects are traced to specific causes, in a vast variety of cases, those causes are only intermediate or secondary. If I ask a philosopher how it is that I can move my finger, he will entertain me with an anatomical disquisition upon

the mechanism of the body ; but if I pursue him with questions, he must acknowledge his ignorance of the phenomenon of life, or say it is the necessary result of organization, which is pretty much the same thing. In short, sir, I am a believer in the existence of spirits and in the doctrine of supernatural agency in human affairs ; and I appeal to the universal consent of mankind to this doctrine in support of its reasonableness ; although I acknowledge that, in times of ignorance, and amongst weak people, it has been, like other sound doctrines, abused and exposed to ridicule."

The reply of the barrister was cut short by the colonel, who appeared to think that the conversation was growing too serious. Taking from his mouth a Persian *kaleeān* (pipe), which had hitherto kept him silent, " I can tell you a little about spirits," said he. Observing our features upon the grin, " It's all true," he abruptly exclaimed, " so help ——."

" Well, well," observed the barrister ; " we know you sufficiently, colonel, to dispense with your oath: Proceed, I pray you."

The colonel proceeded accordingly. " It was, I think, about eighteen years ago,—I was then in command of a company, and was leading a detachment into a part of the Vindyan range, where no

European had hitherto been. My black fellows knew nothing of the country, and I could get no guide upon whom I could depend. The party we were in pursuit of were a set of plunderers, who were reputed to be magicians as well as thieves, and in every village we heard terrifying accounts of their magical exploits. I am not superstitious, as you all know, and the Juggernaut affair will convince you I do not want nerve; but I confess I began to catch a little of the *all-overishness* of those about me.

“ Well, we went on. One night as I lay in my tent, wide awake, ruminating upon what I had heard, I saw,—it was no deception, by Jove,—a black figure, that began to expand itself to prodigious dimensions. I started up and rubbed my eyes; when the figure re-appeared, and began to swell as before. I jumped out of bed, seized my sabre, and began to cut away; but although the weapon went into every part of the carcass, it was like cutting jelly. Upon this I began to call out lustily, ordering my men to surround the tent, and some of them to enter. They saw me cutting away, but saw nothing else—they thought me mad. To make short of the matter, I became thoroughly exhausted, and was laid upon my couch insensible. When I came to myself, I was told that a dark

object, supposed to be one of the hill rascals, had been observed stealing about the skirts of the camp. The incident,—for why should I have made any secret of it?—spread amongst the men, and I had good reason to believe that, if I had advanced an inch further, they would have deserted me. So I gave orders that we should march back, and this was the last order I gave them; for I fell ill of a fever, and became delirious. When I recovered, I found that the retreat of the detachment had been imputed to orders given whilst I was *non compos mentis*, and my lieutenant got a severe wig, poor fellow. But it is remarkable that nothing more was heard of the magician-thieves, and I have no doubt that the being I battled with was their devil, and that some of my slashes must have hit him in a mortal place.”

“You concur with me, then,” observed the civilian, “in a belief in supernatural agency?”

“Why should I doubt it, after what I have told you? But I have positively talked with a demon.”

The civilian, to spare the officer his usual attestation—which fell from him as expletives usually occur in conversation, merely to round a period, or adjust a phrase—humoured the joke, and begged he would relate to us the whole affair.

“ You must know,” said he, “ I once had a Moosulman in my service, who had acquired the whole science of *dawut*, and taught me how to distinguish spirits from men, in whose form they frequently mix with us, and, in the common phrase, literally ‘ play the devil.’ One of the tests was the pronouncing a sort of unmeaning jargon of senseless Arabic—*jallyushin murbushin murkudushin submushin murtushin mylumushin*, &c., to which, if the suspected person makes a reply in a *false* quotation from the *Coran*, he is a demon. I tried this test upon a juggler, and the fellow bit, and told me privately that he was really a devil. I found him a pleasant jolly fellow, with nothing at all of the devil about him. He assured me that these jugglers could do more wonderful tricks than they really perform, were they not afraid of exciting suspicion. He seemed to lead a very happy life, though he hinted that there were some little inconveniences to be endured, of which he did not care to be particular.”

“ I wonder,” said the barrister, “ you did not get him to enlighten you a little on the nature of the soul, the state of future existence, and other matters, on which we lack information.”

The colonel looked serious. “ I did ask him once,” said he, “ what sort of a home he had.

The fellow frowned as darkly as a thunder-cloud, and quitted me hastily. I remember I was attacked that very night with an erysipelas, which I did not get rid of till I saw him again, and made the *amende*."

The civilian now became anxious to change the subject of conversation. He reverted to the subject of the jugglers of India, and mentioned some further instances of their art. He asked the barrister whether it was possible to explain such performances upon natural principles, or to reconcile them with the doctrine that they were merely illusions of the senses.

"If we consider," replied the barrister, "the resources which these men possess in the knowledge of many physical secrets unknown to us, in the phenomena which we know, and presume them to be ignorant of, in their wonderful proficiency in sleight of hand, in the fallibility of senses supposed to be infallible, in the aid derived from the collusion of bystanders, and from the exaggerations of relators, we shall find that they have more advantages than we imagine at first sight they possess. I have hitherto seen no performance of theirs which I could not believe attributable to natural means, and beg therefore to retain my opinion."

The colonel was about to open a fresh budget of supernatural stories, when the barrister, pleading an engagement, deferred the pleasure of hearing them till another opportunity ; and the old civilian looked approbation.

END OF VOL. II.











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